From Alpha to Omega: Zero, Negative Infinity, Teilhard de Chardin's Omega Point, Eulerian Infinity, and Dynamical Systems

Douglas C. Youvan

doug@youvan.com

www.youvan.ai

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The symbols Alpha and Omega express origin, completion, totality, and divine sovereignty, yet their mathematical interpretation is not obvious. If Omega is associated with positive infinity, should Alpha correspond to zero, the first point of an ordered progression, or to negative infinity, the remote past? This paper develops a comparative framework spanning biblical theology, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary Christology, Euler's treatment of infinity, ordinal and real-number structures, and the alpha- and omega-limit sets of dynamical systems. It argues that no single assignment is universally correct because the meaning of Alpha depends on the structure being modeled. In a created sequence, Alpha is naturally represented by zero; on a bi-infinite temporal axis, Alpha is associated with t -> -infinity; in classical theology, however, Alpha is neither a number nor a temporal boundary, but the ontological source of being. Teilhard further transforms Omega from an abstract endpoint into a personal center of cosmic convergence. By distinguishing numerical origins, asymptotic limits, temporal directions, and metaphysical causation, the paper clarifies when Alpha may legitimately signify zero, negative infinity, or something beyond mathematics altogether.

Keywords: Alpha and Omega, zero, negative infinity, positive infinity, Omega Point, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Leonhard Euler, dynamical systems, alpha-limit set, omega-limit set, mathematical theology, Christian cosmology, philosophy of mathematics, infinity, eternity, cosmogenesis, Christogenesis, temporal ontology, ordinal numbers, extended real numbers, attractors, teleology.

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0, 1, 2, 3, ... -> infinity

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-infinity <- ... < -1 < 0 < 1 < ... -> +infinity

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0 <= t < +infinity.

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Represent reality as

Alpha corresponds to t -> -infinity

Omega corresponds to t -> +infinity.

Explain why this model suits past-eternal processes and dynamical alpha- and omega-limits.

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Represent the theological relationship schematically as

Alpha -> creation and history -> Omega

while treating Alpha and Omega as transcendent causal and teleological relations rather than numerical coordinates.

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matter -> life -> consciousness -> noosphere -> Omega.

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12.5 A Unified Vocabulary

Summarize the necessary distinctions among first state, remote past, causal source, asymptotic limit, final boundary, and purposeful fulfillment.

12.6 Final Synthesis

Propose that the deepest Alpha–Omega structure is not adequately represented by a line running from -infinity to +infinity. It is better represented as a relationship in which reality proceeds from a source, develops through an intelligible history, and converges toward fulfillment:

Alpha -> becoming -> Omega.

In mathematics, Alpha may begin at 0 or be associated with t -> -infinity. In theology, Alpha is the reason there is a line, a time, a process, or a universe at all.

13. References

The final section will consolidate biblical texts, primary works by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Leonhard Euler, classical theological sources, historical studies of infinity, mathematical works on ordinals and extended real numbers, research on alpha- and omega-limit sets, and relevant literature in cosmology and the philosophy of time. Full references and any necessary hyperlinks will appear only in this section.

Art

1. The Alpha–Omega Problem: Is the Beginning Zero or Negative Infinity?

1.1 The Central Question

The phrase “Alpha and Omega” traditionally signifies beginning and end, origin and completion, or the totality encompassed between first and last. The difficulty arises when Omega is translated into mathematical language and identified with infinity. If Omega corresponds to +infinity, what should Alpha represent? The most immediate candidates are zero and -infinity. Zero appears natural because it often marks an origin, an initial state, or the first point from which a process is measured. Negative infinity appears equally plausible when Alpha and Omega are treated as opposite directions on a complete temporal or numerical axis. In that case, Alpha would represent the infinitely remote past, while Omega would represent the infinitely remote future.

The choice is not merely notational. Each assignment produces a different model of reality. If Alpha = 0, then the process has a genuine beginning. There is a first state, and all later states follow from it. If Alpha corresponds to -infinity, then the process has no first moment. It extends indefinitely backward, just as it extends indefinitely forward. The question therefore concerns more than the numerical value of a symbol. It concerns whether reality should be represented as a ray, a line, a sequence, a cycle, a dynamical trajectory, or a created order grounded in something beyond time.

A one-sided model may be written as

0 <= t < +infinity.

A two-sided model may be written as

-infinity < t < +infinity.

These expressions look similar, but they encode radically different views of origin. In the first, time begins. In the second, time has no first point. The theological question adds another possibility: Alpha may not be a point on the timeline at all. It may instead designate the source of the entire temporal order.

1.2 Alpha and Omega as Relational Symbols

Alpha and Omega do not possess fixed numerical meanings by themselves. Their meanings arise from the structures in which they are placed. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last. Their symbolic force comes from their relation to the alphabet as a complete ordered system. Alpha means first because it occupies the first position. Omega means last because it occupies the final position. Neither symbol inherently means zero, infinity, past eternity, or future eternity.

The same principle applies in mathematics. A symbol acquires meaning through definition. The letter alpha may denote an angle, a constant, a coefficient, a parameter, an ordinal, a limit set, or an arbitrary element. Omega may denote angular frequency, an outcome space, an infinite ordinal, a region, a physical quantity, or a limit set. No mathematical rule requires Alpha to mean zero or Omega to mean infinity.

The symbolic pair nevertheless invites structural analogy. If Alpha and Omega represent the boundaries of an ordered whole, then one may ask what sort of whole is being imagined. In a finite alphabet, there is a first member and a last member. In the natural numbers, there may be a first number but no last finite number. In the integers, there is neither a first nor a last number. In an extended number line, -infinity and +infinity may be introduced as ideal boundary points. In a dynamical system, alpha and omega may describe the remote past and remote future behavior of a trajectory.

The symbols therefore change meaning as the underlying structure changes. Alpha can represent an initial element only in a system that actually has one. Omega can represent a final element only in a system that contains or adjoins such an endpoint. A theology of Alpha and Omega cannot be reduced to mathematics unless the relevant structure is first made explicit.

1.3 Four Meanings of a Beginning

The word “beginning” is ambiguous. At least four distinct meanings must be separated.

The first is a first element. A sequence such as

0, 1, 2, 3, ...

has an identifiable starting member. Here the beginning is internal to the sequence. Zero belongs to the system and occupies its first position.

The second is a first moment in time. A cosmological model may define t = 0 as the earliest physical time. This does not necessarily mean that zero is the first object in a sequence. It means that the coordinate system used to describe cosmic history begins there. Whether t = 0 is a true physical beginning, a singular boundary, a transition, or merely the limit of a model is a further question.

The third is a causal origin. Something may be the beginning of a process without being temporally earlier than it. A cause can be understood as that upon which an effect continuously depends. In theology, God may be called the beginning of creation not because God occupies an earlier temporal position, but because created existence depends upon God. This is an ontological beginning rather than a chronological one.

The fourth is an asymptotic past boundary. In a trajectory defined for all real times, there may be no first moment. Nevertheless, one may investigate what happens as

t -> -infinity.

Here the “beginning” is not a first state. It is a limiting direction. The system recedes endlessly into the past, and Alpha refers to the behavior approached in that direction.

These four meanings should not be confused. A first element is not the same as a first moment. A first moment is not the same as a causal source. A causal source is not the same as an asymptotic past limit. Much of the confusion surrounding Alpha and Omega results from treating these distinct ideas as though they were interchangeable.

1.4 The Paper’s Central Thesis

The central thesis of this paper is that no single mathematical assignment of Alpha is correct in every context. The appropriate interpretation depends on the structure being modeled.

When Alpha represents the first state of a one-sided sequence, Alpha = 0 is the most natural assignment. The system begins at a definite origin and proceeds toward later states:

Alpha = 0,

0, 1, 2, 3, ... -> infinity.

When Alpha represents the remote past of a process extending indefinitely in both temporal directions, Alpha is naturally associated with -infinity:

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

This does not mean that alpha is numerically identical to -infinity. It means that alpha describes the limiting behavior of the system in the negative-time direction.

When Alpha is used theologically, neither equation is fully adequate. God as Alpha is not zero, because zero is a mathematical object within a formal system. God is not -infinity, because -infinity is a limiting direction within an extended numerical or temporal framework. Classical theology identifies God as the source of the framework itself: the source of time, number, order, causation, and existence.

The resulting conclusion is conditional rather than absolute. Alpha = 0 is appropriate for initialized processes. Alpha corresponds to -infinity for bi-infinite processes. Alpha transcends both when it names the ontological source of being.

1.5 Interdisciplinary Method

The problem requires an interdisciplinary method because the same symbols function differently in theology, mathematics, cosmology, and dynamical systems. Biblical theology examines Alpha and Omega as names of divine sovereignty, creation, judgment, and fulfillment. Historical theology distinguishes divine eternity from infinite temporal duration. Teilhard de Chardin interprets Alpha and Omega within an evolutionary cosmos moving toward increasing complexity, consciousness, and union in Christ.

Mathematics provides several competing structures. Natural numbers support the idea of a first element. The integers support a two-sided unbounded order. Ordinal numbers provide a first infinite ordinal called omega. The extended real numbers adjoin -infinity and +infinity as ideal boundary elements. Dynamical systems employ alpha-limit and omega-limit sets to describe behavior toward the remote past and future.

These disciplines should not be collapsed into one another. Mathematical language can clarify theological distinctions, but it cannot prove theological claims merely by analogy. Theology can supply questions of origin and purpose, but it cannot determine mathematical definitions independently of formal structure. Cosmology may describe the earliest state accessible to physical theory, but it cannot by itself establish the metaphysical source of existence.

The goal is therefore not to force a single equation upon every domain. It is to determine which interpretation is valid in each domain and where the analogies cease to hold. The Alpha–Omega problem becomes intelligible only when first state, first moment, causal origin, past limit, future limit, and final purpose are carefully distinguished.

2. Alpha and Omega in Biblical Theology

2.1 The Alphabetic Meaning of Totality

The phrase “Alpha and Omega” draws its power from the structure of language itself. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last. Together they signify not merely two isolated points but the totality contained between them. The expression therefore functions as a statement of completeness. To claim authority over Alpha and Omega is to claim authority over the whole order from beginning to end.

This form of expression resembles other biblical constructions in which two extremes represent everything between them. Heaven and earth can signify the whole created order. Morning and evening can represent the full span of a day. First and last can encompass an entire sequence. The meaning is not limited to the endpoints. The endpoints define the total field.

Alpha and Omega are therefore better understood initially as symbols of comprehensiveness than as mathematical coordinates. Alpha does not mean zero simply because it comes first, and Omega does not mean infinity simply because it comes last. The Greek alphabet is finite. Omega is the final letter of a completed linguistic sequence, not an endless continuation beyond every finite term.

The theological significance lies in the claim that God encompasses every stage of reality. Nothing precedes the divine source, nothing exceeds the divine end, and nothing between origin and fulfillment lies outside divine sovereignty. The alphabetic symbolism expresses totality, order, intelligibility, and completion.

This already creates tension with the identification of Omega as infinity. Infinity has no last finite term. Omega in an alphabet is a final member, whereas mathematical infinity is often not a member at all but an indication of unboundedness. Biblical Omega therefore concerns completion more directly than endless numerical extension.

2.2 Alpha and Omega in the Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation uses several closely related titles: Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, first and last. These expressions occur within visions of divine sovereignty, judgment, renewal, and the completion of history. They are not offered as abstract philosophical definitions. They appear as declarations of identity and authority.

The speaker who claims to be Alpha and Omega does not merely claim to have existed at the earliest moment and to continue until the latest moment. The claim is stronger. It identifies the divine speaker as the one from whom history derives its meaning and in whom history reaches its completion. The title embraces the whole drama of creation, conflict, judgment, redemption, and renewal.

The expression “first and last” carries a similar force. To be first is not only to appear earlier than every created thing. It is to possess priority, supremacy, and independence. To be last is not merely to survive longer than everything else. It is to remain the final authority and the one in whom all purposes are resolved.

The language of beginning and end likewise exceeds chronology. A beginning may be a source, principle, or cause. An end may be a termination, but it may also be a goal, fulfillment, or purpose. Biblical theology frequently uses end language teleologically. The end is that for the sake of which a process reaches completion.

The Alpha–Omega declarations therefore combine several meanings at once:

Alpha as priority,

Alpha as source,

Omega as completion,

Omega as final authority,

and Alpha–Omega together as comprehensive sovereignty.

Any mathematical interpretation must preserve this density of meaning or acknowledge that it captures only one aspect of the biblical symbol.

2.3 Creation and Consummation

The biblical structure of history is not merely a movement from an early date to a late date. It is a movement from creation to consummation. Creation establishes the world as a meaningful order. Consummation brings that order to its intended fulfillment.

Alpha can therefore be associated with creation, but not simply as the first tick of a cosmic clock. The theological claim is that the universe receives existence, order, and intelligibility from God. The beginning is not merely the earliest observable state. It is the act by which there is a world capable of having states at all.

Omega can be associated with consummation, but not simply as infinite duration. Biblical completion involves judgment, renewal, reconciliation, resurrection, and the establishment of a final order. Omega is not the endless postponement of completion. It is completion itself.

This distinction is crucial. A process that continues forever may never arrive at a fulfilled state. An endless sequence such as

1, 2, 3, 4, ...

has no final finite member. It progresses without completion. Biblical Omega, by contrast, signifies the realization of divine purpose. The emphasis is not merely on continuation but on fulfillment.

A theological model of history might therefore be represented schematically as

creation -> covenant -> redemption -> judgment -> renewal.

This sequence is not a mathematical proof or precise chronology. It is a narrative structure. Alpha is associated with the establishment of the order, and Omega with its consummation.

The relation between creation and consummation also prevents Alpha and Omega from being treated as symmetrical numerical opposites. Creation and fulfillment are not mirror images. Creation gives existence. Fulfillment brings that existence to its intended end. The two are related, but they perform different theological functions.

2.4 Christ as Beginning and End

Christian theology increasingly concentrates the Alpha–Omega symbolism in the person of Christ. Christ is understood not merely as a figure who appears at one stage within history but as the one through whom creation originates, in whom it is sustained, and toward whom it moves.

This Christological interpretation transforms the symbols. Alpha is no longer only the beginning of a timeline. It becomes the personal source of creation. Omega is no longer only the final point of the same timeline. It becomes the personal fulfillment of creation.

The structure may be expressed as

from Christ -> through Christ -> toward Christ.

This formulation places Christ at the origin, within the process, and at the goal. It therefore resists any simple attempt to identify Alpha with t = 0 and Omega with t = +infinity. Christ is not restricted to the beginning or end as though absent from the middle. The divine presence encompasses and sustains the entire history.

Theologically, this means that Alpha and Omega are not two separate realities. They are two aspects of the identity and action of the same divine person. The one who originates creation is also the one who completes it. The source and goal are unified.

This unity has important implications for the later comparison with Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard's Omega Point is not merely a future state toward which the universe drifts. It is identified with Christ as a presently active center of convergence. That interpretation depends upon the prior Christian claim that Christ is not only at the end of the process but also its sustaining principle.

2.5 Why Biblical Alpha Is Not Simply Zero

Zero is a powerful symbol of origin, but biblical Alpha cannot be reduced to zero. In mathematics, zero may represent an additive identity, a coordinate origin, the absence of quantity, a neutral balance, or the initial value of a process. None of these meanings is equivalent to the biblical conception of God as Alpha.

If Alpha were identified directly with zero, several confusions would follow. First, zero belongs to a mathematical system. God as Alpha is not one element within a larger system. The theological claim is that every created system depends upon God.

Second, zero may indicate absence, but God is not understood as absence. Biblical Alpha is active, creative, personal, and sovereign. It is not a blank condition from which reality spontaneously develops.

Third, zero can mark the first measured moment of a timeline, but the theology of creation does not require God to occupy that moment as one event among others. God is not simply located at t = 0. God is the reason that t, measurement, sequence, and causation exist.

A mathematical model may use

t = 0

to designate the beginning of cosmic history. Such a model can be useful. But it should distinguish the beginning of the timeline from the source of the timeline. The first is a coordinate. The second is a metaphysical explanation.

Biblical Alpha is therefore better described as origin rather than zero. Zero may symbolize an initial boundary, but it does not exhaust the theological meaning of divine priority.

2.6 Why Biblical Omega Is Not Merely Infinity

The identification of Omega with infinity is attractive because infinity suggests transcendence, inexhaustibility, and continuation beyond every finite boundary. Yet biblical Omega is not merely mathematical infinity.

In mathematics, infinity often indicates that a quantity grows without bound. For example,

n -> +infinity

means that n exceeds every finite value. This is a statement about unbounded growth or limiting behavior. It does not imply completion, purpose, judgment, reconciliation, or personal fulfillment.

Biblical Omega includes these teleological dimensions. It names the end in the sense of consummation. Omega is not simply a future that recedes forever as one approaches it. It is the fulfillment toward which history is directed.

This difference can be illustrated by contrasting two forms:

1, 2, 3, 4, ... -> +infinity

and

creation -> fulfillment.

The first has no final finite term. The second is ordered toward a meaningful completion. The mathematical sequence expresses endless continuation. The theological sequence expresses purpose.

Omega may be infinite in the sense that divine life and fulfillment are not exhausted by finite limits. But infinity alone is too thin a concept. It does not explain what is fulfilled, who fulfills it, or why the end possesses meaning.

The biblical pair therefore cannot be translated adequately as

Alpha = 0,

Omega = +infinity.

That equation captures only one possible structural analogy: a movement from an initial condition toward an unbounded future. It does not capture divine identity, creative causation, sovereignty, judgment, redemption, or consummation.

The stronger theological formulation is

Alpha = divine source,

Omega = divine fulfillment.

Even this remains symbolic rather than literal. Its value lies in distinguishing two relations of the same divine reality to creation: the relation of origin and the relation of completion.

The biblical meaning of Alpha and Omega is therefore neither merely numerical nor merely temporal. It is ontological, historical, personal, and teleological. God is Alpha because all created reality depends upon God as source. God is Omega because all created history is judged and fulfilled in relation to God as its final end. The entire movement between beginning and completion is encompassed within the same divine sovereignty.

3. Classical Christian Theology: Creation, Eternity, and Ontological Priority

3.1 God Before the Beginning

The phrase “God before the beginning” is difficult because the word “before” ordinarily refers to an earlier moment in time. If time itself is part of creation, however, then there was no temporal interval during which God waited for the universe to begin. Classical Christian theology therefore distinguishes between temporal priority and ontological priority.

To say that God is before creation does not necessarily mean that God existed during an earlier period measured by clocks. It means that creation depends upon God, while God does not depend upon creation. God is prior as cause, source, and ground of being.

This distinction prevents the beginning of the universe from being imagined too simply as a point on an already existing line:

... -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, ...

In such a model, t = 0 is surrounded by earlier and later times. If creation begins at t = 0, one might ask what happened at t = -1. Classical theology answers that this question may be malformed. There may be no negative-time region before creation because time itself begins with the created order.

A more appropriate representation is

God -> creation of time and the universe.

The arrow does not indicate temporal succession in the ordinary sense. It expresses dependence. Time follows from creation because time belongs to the created order.

God as Alpha therefore cannot be identified merely with the earliest coordinate on a timeline. Alpha names the source from which the timeline receives existence.

3.2 Creation ex Nihilo and the Symbolism of Zero

The doctrine of creation ex nihilo states that the universe was not formed from an eternal material substance independent of God. Creation is not the rearrangement of matter that already existed on its own. The phrase means creation from no preexisting created material.

Zero may seem to provide a natural mathematical symbol for this idea. One might imagine a transition such as

0 -> universe.

Yet this symbolism must be treated cautiously. Mathematical zero is not metaphysical nothingness. Zero is a defined number with precise relations to other numbers. It can be added, subtracted, multiplied, placed on a coordinate line, and used as an initial value. Absolute nothingness has no such formal properties.

Zero belongs to a mathematical order. Nothingness, if understood strictly, is the absence of any created object, quantity, space, time, law, or possibility instantiated in reality. It is not a state with a numerical value.

The doctrine of creation ex nihilo also does not mean that nothing acted as a material or causal source. Nothingness is not a substance from which the world emerged. The claim is instead that God created without using an independently existing material cause.

A schematic formulation might be

God -> created reality,

not

nothing -> created reality.

Zero may symbolize the absence of measured quantity, but it cannot function as the creative agent. It may represent an initial coordinate or boundary, yet the theological source remains God rather than zero.

This distinction is essential for the Alpha question. If Alpha is identified with zero because creation began at t = 0, then Alpha refers to the beginning of measured cosmic time. If Alpha refers to God, then Alpha transcends that coordinate.

3.3 Temporal Priority and Ontological Priority

Temporal priority means that one event occurs earlier than another. If event A happens at t = 1 and event B happens at t = 2, then A is temporally prior to B.

Ontological priority concerns dependence rather than chronology. A reality is ontologically prior when another reality depends upon it for existence, explanation, structure, or continuing actuality.

An author may be ontologically prior to a fictional narrative without being a character who appears before the first scene. The author stands outside the narrative order while causing the narrative to exist. The analogy is imperfect, but it illustrates how causal priority differs from earlier temporal location.

Classical theology understands God as ontologically prior to creation. Every created moment depends upon God, not only the first one. Divine causation is therefore not restricted to an initial act in the remote past. Creation is sustained continuously.

This may be expressed as

for every created time t,

existence of the universe at t depends upon God.

Under this view, God is not simply the first member of a sequence:

God, universe, stars, life, humanity.

Such a list would place God and created things within the same category. Classical theology instead treats God as the cause of the entire sequence and of the conditions that make sequence possible.

Alpha therefore means more than “earliest.” It means that from which all else derives. This interpretation explains why assigning Alpha either zero or -infinity is inadequate. Both are

positions or limiting directions within a mathematical structure. Ontological priority concerns the source of the structure itself.

3.4 Eternity Is Not Infinite Duration

Eternity is often imagined as time extending without beginning or end:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

This is infinite duration. It describes a timeline containing endlessly many moments in both directions. Classical Christian theology usually means something different when it speaks of divine eternity.

God is not merely an entity who has lived for infinitely many years. Divine eternity is traditionally understood as a mode of existence not divided into temporal succession in the way created life is. God does not move from an unknown past through a fleeting present toward an unrealized future.

Infinite temporal duration still involves sequence. One moment follows another. Even if the sequence has no first or last member, it remains temporal. Eternity, in the classical sense, is not merely more time. It is not the largest possible quantity of time.

This distinction matters for the proposed equation

Alpha = -infinity,

Omega = +infinity.

That equation may represent an eternal timeline in the sense of endless duration. It does not represent divine eternity. Negative infinity is still one direction within temporal order, and positive infinity is the opposite direction. God as eternal is not located at either end.

The theological model is therefore not simply

-infinity <- God -> +infinity.

God is not the central point of an infinitely extended line. Nor is God distributed along the line as though divine life consisted of infinitely many successive moments.

A better conceptual distinction is

created time = succession,

divine eternity = non-temporal fullness.

This does not eliminate every mystery. It clarifies that theological eternity should not be reduced to unbounded chronological length.

3.5 Augustine on Time and Creation

Augustine's reflections on creation and time provide one of the most influential treatments of the question. He rejected the idea that God waited through an infinite period before deciding to create. Waiting requires time, and time belongs to creation.

The question "What was God doing before creation?" assumes that there was a temporal before. Augustine's response is that time itself began with the world. There was no earlier duration during which nothing happened.

The structure can be represented as

not: time -> God waits -> creation,

but: God -> creation of a temporal world.

This position does not require that the universe be infinitely old. Nor does it place God at a negative-infinite moment. It removes God from the temporal series altogether.

Augustine also analyzed the instability of temporal experience. The past no longer exists, the future does not yet exist, and the present seems to vanish as soon as it is identified. Human beings nevertheless experience memory, attention, and expectation. Time is therefore deeply connected with consciousness and change.

Creation, in this framework, is not an event inserted into preexisting empty time. It is the beginning of the temporal order. The first moment, if there is one, has no earlier created moment before it.

This gives support to the representation

t >= 0

for created time. Yet Augustine would not equate God with t = 0. The coordinate belongs to creation. God is the cause of the beginning, not the numerical beginning itself.

Augustine's view therefore favors zero over negative infinity as a model of created temporal origin, while still denying that Alpha can be reduced to zero.

3.6 Aquinas on God as First Cause and Final End

Thomas Aquinas developed a systematic distinction between God as first cause and God as final end. These two roles correspond closely to the theological meanings of Alpha and Omega.

God as first cause does not merely mean the earliest event in a temporal chain. Aquinas argues that created causes possess their power and existence derivatively. God is first because every created cause depends upon God.

Consider a causal sequence:

A causes B,

B causes C,

C causes D.

The question of first cause is not necessarily the question of which event occurred earliest. It concerns what gives the entire causal order its actuality. A series might extend indefinitely backward in time and still depend ontologically upon a first cause in this deeper sense.

This is especially important for the Alpha = -infinity question. Even if the universe had no temporal beginning, Aquinas would not conclude that it had no creator. A past-eternal world could still be created because creation concerns dependence for existence rather than merely having a first moment.

The distinction may be expressed as

temporal beginning is not identical to created dependence.

Therefore,

no first temporal moment does not imply no creator.

God as final end likewise means more than the final chronological event. An end can be a goal toward which action is ordered. In this sense, Omega is not merely the last point on a timeline. It is the ultimate good and fulfillment toward which created beings are directed.

Aquinas thus presents a dual structure:

God as efficient cause: from whom creation exists,

God as final cause: toward whom creation is ordered.

This relation closely parallels

Alpha = source,

Omega = fulfillment.

The beginning and end are united in the same divine reality, but they describe different relations. Alpha concerns derivation. Omega concerns completion.

The finite or infinite age of the universe does not alter this fundamental dependence. Whether cosmic time has the form

0 <= t < +infinity

or

-infinity < t < +infinity,

the universe remains contingent in Aquinas's framework. Its temporal structure does not explain why it exists.

This point prevents theology from being decided by the mathematical choice between zero and negative infinity. Zero describes a possible temporal beginning. Negative infinity describes a possible absence of temporal beginning. Neither describes the ultimate cause of being.

Classical Christian theology therefore introduces a category that mathematics alone does not supply. Alpha is not merely the first value of t. Alpha is that upon which every value of t depends. Omega is not merely the limit t -> +infinity. Omega is the ultimate end in relation to which created existence receives purpose and fulfillment.

The central theological formulation may be summarized as

God is not one point on the timeline,

God is the source of the timeline,

the sustainer of every moment on it,

and the final end toward which creation is ordered.

Under this formulation, Alpha is neither zero nor negative infinity. Zero may represent the first created moment. Negative infinity may represent an indefinitely extended created past. God as Alpha is ontologically prior to either model.

4. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Cosmogenesis and the Omega Point

4.1 Evolution as Cosmogenesis

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin interpreted evolution as more than a biological mechanism. For him, evolution was part of a larger cosmic process through which matter, life, consciousness, and spiritual awareness progressively emerge. He described this process as cosmogenesis: the universe is not merely a completed object but an unfolding history.

In a static picture of creation, the cosmos may be imagined as a finished structure established at the beginning. Teilhard instead emphasized becoming. The universe develops through stages, and each stage creates conditions for new forms of organization. Matter forms stars and planets. Chemical systems generate increasing complexity. Life emerges, diversifies, and

develops nervous systems. Consciousness becomes reflective, and human beings become aware not only of the world but of themselves within it.

This sequence may be represented schematically as

matter -> life -> consciousness -> reflective consciousness.

The arrows do not imply that every transition is simple, inevitable, or fully understood. They indicate a direction of increasing organization and interiority.

Teilhard's cosmogenesis therefore changes the Alpha–Omega problem. Alpha is not merely the first chronological point, and Omega is not merely the final chronological point. The universe is understood as a process whose earlier states contain possibilities that become increasingly actualized. Omega names the fulfillment of this movement.

The process also resists the idea that creation occurred only once in a remote past. Creation is expressed through continuing emergence. The universe is still becoming what it can be. Divine creativity is therefore encountered not only at the initial boundary but throughout cosmic development.

4.2 Complexity and Consciousness

A central feature of Teilhard's thought is the relationship between complexity and consciousness. As matter becomes organized into increasingly complex structures, new forms of interiority appear. Simple physical systems exhibit little or no observable consciousness. Living systems display sensitivity, adaptation, and coordinated behavior. Animals develop perception and memory. Human beings become capable of reflection, symbolic thought, moral judgment, and self-consciousness.

Teilhard did not reduce consciousness to mere numerical complexity. He did not claim that any sufficiently complicated arrangement automatically becomes conscious in a mechanically predictable way. Rather, he argued that the history of evolution displays a broad correlation between organized complexity and increasing interiority.

This relation may be expressed conceptually as

increasing organized complexity -> increasing capacity for consciousness.

The important word is organized. A random accumulation of parts may be highly numerous without possessing meaningful structure. Complexity becomes evolutionarily significant when components are integrated into a functioning whole.

Teilhard also proposed that consciousness is not an accidental interruption within an otherwise unconscious cosmos. Human reflection reveals something latent within the evolutionary

movement. The universe has produced beings capable of knowing the universe, interpreting its history, and asking about its purpose.

This does not mean that early matter possessed human consciousness in miniature. It means that the potential for consciousness belongs to the developmental possibilities of the cosmos. Human awareness represents a new threshold at which evolution becomes conscious of itself.

The Alpha–Omega structure therefore becomes developmental. Alpha contains the conditions of possibility for the process. Omega represents the fullest integration of consciousness, personality, and unity.

4.3 The Noosphere

Teilhard used the term noosphere to describe the emerging sphere of human thought surrounding the planet. Just as the biosphere consists of the global domain of life, the noosphere consists of communication, knowledge, culture, technology, memory, and collective reflection.

Human beings do not evolve only through biological inheritance. They also transmit language, ideas, institutions, scientific knowledge, religious traditions, and technical systems. Each generation receives a cultural world created by previous generations and adds to it.

The emergence of writing, printing, telecommunications, computing, and global networks intensifies this process. Human thought becomes increasingly interconnected. Ideas circulate rapidly across geographic boundaries, and collective knowledge accumulates beyond the capacity of any individual mind.

The structure may be represented as

individual minds -> communication networks -> shared knowledge -> planetary reflection.

Teilhard did not regard the noosphere as a simple merger in which individuals lose their identity. Genuine union, in his view, should intensify personhood rather than erase it. The more deeply persons are united in love and shared purpose, the more fully personal they may become.

This is important because a purely mechanical convergence could produce uniformity, control, or collective absorption. Teilhard's theological convergence is different. It aims at unity through differentiation.

The noosphere is therefore not itself Omega. It is an intermediate stage in which consciousness becomes increasingly networked and planetary. It may prepare the conditions for deeper convergence, but it can also generate conflict, fragmentation, propaganda, and technological domination. Connection alone does not guarantee spiritual unity.

4.4 Omega as a Center of Convergence

Teilhard's Omega Point is the proposed center toward which the evolutionary movement of consciousness converges. Omega is not merely the last event in cosmic time. It functions as the principle of unification that gives direction to the process.

A mathematical sequence moving toward infinity may continue without ever reaching a final member:

1, 2, 3, 4, ... -> +infinity.

Teilhard's Omega is not simply the endless continuation of this pattern. It is a center of fulfillment. The movement toward Omega involves increasing unity, consciousness, freedom, and personalization.

This convergence may be represented as

many centers of consciousness -> deeper relation -> higher unity -> Omega.

The metaphor of a center is important. A center is not merely located after all other points. It organizes their relations. Omega therefore has both future and present significance. It is future as the fulfillment toward which evolution moves, yet it is present as the power of attraction already shaping that movement.

Teilhard's Omega resembles an attractor in dynamical systems, but the analogy must remain limited. A mathematical attractor is a set toward which trajectories evolve under specified equations. Omega is personal, spiritual, and theological. It is not merely the output of impersonal dynamics.

The concept of convergence also differs from simple aggregation. Adding more individuals, more information, or more technology does not automatically produce Omega. Convergence requires integration without destruction of personal uniqueness.

4.5 Omega as Personal Rather Than Abstract

Teilhard insisted that the final center of convergence must be personal. An impersonal endpoint could not adequately unite personal centers of consciousness. If evolution produces persons capable of knowledge, love, and freedom, then its fulfillment cannot simply dissolve those persons into an anonymous totality.

For Teilhard, genuine union does not eliminate distinction. Love unites persons precisely by relating distinct centers of consciousness. A final unity that erased personality would represent regression rather than fulfillment.

Omega must therefore possess the qualities necessary to sustain personal convergence. It must be conscious rather than unconscious, active rather than passive, and capable of relationship rather than mere absorption.

This can be expressed as

personal centers cannot reach fulfillment in an entirely impersonal end.

The conclusion is theological. Omega is not simply a law, field, equation, or collective state. It is a supreme personal center capable of drawing other persons into union without destroying them.

This personal interpretation distinguishes Teilhard's Omega from mathematical infinity. Infinity has no consciousness, intention, or capacity for love. It may describe unbounded magnitude, endless sequence, or limiting behavior, but it cannot by itself serve as the personal fulfillment of consciousness.

4.6 Christogenesis

Teilhard identified the Omega Point with Christ. This identification transforms cosmogenesis into Christogenesis: the development of the cosmos toward increasing unity in Christ.

Christogenesis does not mean that Christ gradually comes into existence as a product of evolution. Rather, it means that the cosmic process becomes increasingly ordered toward its fulfillment in the cosmic Christ. Christ is both transcendent to the process and active within it.

The structure may be expressed as

cosmogenesis -> biogenesis -> noogenesis -> Christogenesis.

Cosmogenesis refers to the development of the universe. Biogenesis refers to the emergence and evolution of life. Noogenesis refers to the emergence of reflective thought. Christogenesis refers to the unification of creation in Christ.

This framework gives theological depth to evolution. Evolution is not merely a sequence of accidental changes. It becomes part of a larger drama in which matter is capable of life, life of consciousness, consciousness of communion, and communion of fulfillment in Christ.

Teilhard's interpretation does not eliminate natural processes. It does not require every biological event to be directly miraculous. Rather, it places natural history within a theological horizon.

Christ as Omega is therefore not simply waiting at the far end of time. Christ is the center whose attraction makes final convergence possible.

4.7 Alpha and Omega as One Divine Reality

For Teilhard, Alpha and Omega cannot ultimately be separated. The source of the evolutionary process and its final center are not two unrelated powers. The same divine reality grounds the beginning and draws creation toward fulfillment.

This creates a structure of return:

from God -> through creation -> toward God.

The process is not circular in the sense of returning to an unchanged starting condition. Creation develops, differentiates, becomes conscious, and enters into deeper union. The return is therefore transformative.

Alpha names divine creativity as source. Omega names divine fulfillment as goal. Yet both refer to the same Christological reality.

This unity prevents Alpha from being identified simply with a remote past and Omega with a remote future. The divine Alpha remains present throughout the process, and the divine Omega is already active before the final consummation.

The theological sequence is therefore not

Alpha disappears -> history unfolds alone -> Omega appears.

It is closer to

Alpha grounds history,

Omega attracts history,

and the same divine presence sustains the whole movement.

This view also challenges the symmetry of -infinity and +infinity. Negative infinity and positive infinity are opposing directions within a mathematical structure. Alpha and Omega are distinct relations of the same divine source and goal to creation.

4.8 Would Teilhard Choose Zero or Negative Infinity?

If forced to choose between zero and negative infinity as a symbol for Alpha, Teilhard would likely regard both as incomplete.

Zero may represent the beginning of measurable cosmogenesis. A cosmological timeline can be written as

t = 0 -> cosmic development.

In that restricted sense, zero is useful. It identifies an initial boundary or reference point.

Negative infinity may represent a process without a first temporal moment:

t -> -infinity.

This could model a past-eternal cosmos or the remote past behavior of a dynamical system. Yet it does not identify a divine source. It merely states that no first temporal point exists.

Teilhard's Alpha is deeper than either possibility. Alpha is not simply when the universe begins. Alpha is why the universe exists and why it possesses the capacity to evolve toward consciousness and unity.

His answer might therefore be summarized as

cosmic Alpha may be represented by t = 0,

but divine Alpha is not equal to 0.

A past-eternal cosmos may extend toward t -> -infinity,

but divine Alpha is not equal to -infinity.

Omega likewise cannot be reduced to +infinity. Mathematical infinity describes unbounded continuation. Teilhard's Omega describes convergence toward personal fulfillment in Christ.

The most adequate Teilhardian model is therefore

Alpha -> cosmogenesis -> life -> consciousness -> noosphere -> Omega,

with the added qualification that Alpha and Omega are not merely the first and last entries in the sequence. They are the one divine reality related to creation as source and fulfillment.

Teilhard's thought thus provides a mediating position. He accepts the scientific importance of temporal development and evolutionary emergence, but he refuses to reduce theological meaning to chronology. Alpha is not merely the first date. Omega is not merely the last limit. The universe proceeds from divine creativity, develops through increasing complexity and consciousness, and converges toward personal union in Christ.

5. Leonhard Euler: Infinity, Series, and Mathematical Interpretation

5.1 Euler's Mathematical World

Leonhard Euler worked at a decisive stage in the development of modern mathematics. His writings helped shape analysis, number theory, mechanics, geometry, differential equations,

logarithms, exponentials, and the notation still used in many mathematical fields. He treated mathematics as a language for expressing relationships among quantities, functions, changes, and infinite processes.

Euler's world was mathematically sophisticated but conceptually different from that of later nineteenth- and twentieth-century mathematics. The rigorous definitions of limits, set theory, transfinite cardinal numbers, and transfinite ordinal numbers were not yet fully developed. Nevertheless, Euler worked constantly with quantities that became arbitrarily large, quantities that became arbitrarily small, infinite series, and expressions involving limiting behavior.

If Euler were asked whether Alpha should equal zero or negative infinity when Omega represents infinity, he would probably begin by rejecting any automatic assignment. The letters alpha and omega would not possess intrinsic numerical values. A symbol means what the mathematical problem defines it to mean.

Euler would therefore ask several preliminary questions. Is the system a sequence with a first member? Is it the complete number line? Is time assumed to have a first instant? Is infinity being treated as unbounded growth, a limiting direction, or an ideal endpoint? Is Alpha a number, a parameter, or a name for limiting behavior?

Only after these structural questions were answered could Alpha be assigned coherently.

5.2 Infinity in Eighteenth-Century Analysis

In Euler's analysis, infinity often functioned as the expression of a quantity exceeding every assignable finite magnitude. It did not necessarily function as an ordinary number placed after all finite numbers.

This distinction remains important. When one writes

x -> +infinity,

the statement does not ordinarily mean that x eventually arrives at a largest number called infinity. It means that x becomes larger than any finite bound specified in advance.

Similarly,

x -> -infinity

means that x becomes smaller than every finite lower bound. It does not necessarily mean that x arrives at a smallest number called negative infinity.

Euler sometimes manipulated infinite and infinitesimal quantities more freely than later standards of rigor would permit. Yet his calculations often anticipated methods that were later

formalized through limits. He recognized meaningful distinctions among finite quantities, indefinitely increasing quantities, and quantities diminishing toward zero.

In the Alpha–Omega question, this means that Omega as infinity may represent direction rather than destination. If Omega means movement toward values without upper bound, then Alpha need not be the first member of the same kind. It could be an initial finite value, or it could designate the opposite unbounded direction.

Thus two structures remain possible:

0 <= x < +infinity

and

-infinity < x < +infinity.

Euler would not choose between them without knowing which structure the problem intended.

5.3 Infinite Series and Limiting Processes

Euler's work with infinite series illustrates why infinity should not always be treated as a final term. An infinite series has the form

a1 + a2 + a3 + a4 + ...

The dots indicate that the sequence of terms continues without a final finite position. The value of the series, when it converges, is determined not by reaching an infinite-numbered term but by examining the behavior of partial sums.

If

S_n = a1 + a2 + ... + a_n,

then the infinite series is associated with the limiting behavior of S_n as

n -> +infinity.

This framework distinguishes the process from its limit. The index n grows without bound, while the partial sums may approach a finite value, diverge, oscillate, or behave irregularly.

The distinction is relevant to theological uses of Omega. If Omega is interpreted mathematically as n -> +infinity, then Omega names a direction of continuation. It does not necessarily name a completed state. A convergent sequence may approach a limit, but an unbounded sequence does not culminate in a final finite term.

Consider

1, 2, 3, 4, ...

This sequence grows without bound. It does not converge to a finite number.

Now consider

1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, ...

This sequence approaches zero as

n -> +infinity.

In the first case, infinity describes unbounded growth. In the second, infinity describes the direction in which the sequence is examined, while zero is the limit.

Euler would therefore distinguish between the variable tending toward infinity and the value approached by the system. Omega could describe either, but the distinction must be stated.

5.4 Zero, Negative Quantities, and Opposite Directions

Zero occupies a special place in mathematics. It is the additive identity:

x + 0 = x.

It also functions as an origin separating positive and negative values. On the number line,

negative numbers < 0 < positive numbers.

This makes zero a natural candidate for Alpha when Alpha represents an initialized process. A variable may begin at zero and increase:

x = 0, 1, 2, 3, ...

In such a model, zero is a genuine member of the system and the first assigned value.

Negative quantities, however, introduce the possibility of a two-sided structure. If positive values represent one direction from the origin, negative values represent the opposite direction. A complete line is not bounded by zero on the left. It continues indefinitely:

... -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, ...

If Omega is associated with the positive unbounded direction, then Alpha may naturally be associated with the negative unbounded direction.

The resulting symbolic pairing is

Alpha <-> -infinity,

Omega <-> +infinity.

Yet zero remains central. It separates the two directions. In this structure, zero is not Alpha. It is the midpoint or reference origin.

Euler would therefore recognize that zero and negative infinity answer different questions. Zero answers, “Where does measurement begin?” Negative infinity answers, “What is the direction opposite positive infinity on an unbounded line?”

The correct choice depends on whether the model is a ray or a line.

5.5 What the Symbol Alpha Would Mean to Euler

For Euler, alpha would ordinarily be a symbol whose meaning was assigned locally. It might represent a constant, an angle, a coefficient, a root, or a parameter. It would not automatically mean firstness merely because Alpha is the first Greek letter.

This distinction between symbolic order and mathematical definition is essential. In ordinary language, Alpha may mean beginning. In mathematics, alpha means whatever the equation or definition states.

For example,

y = alpha x + beta

could use alpha as a coefficient. Nothing in the expression requires alpha to equal zero, one, or negative infinity.

Similarly,

alpha < x < omega

would be meaningless until alpha and omega were defined. They might be finite bounds, abstract elements, ordinal symbols, or labels.

Euler would likely insist that the statement

Alpha = ?

cannot be answered from the name alone.

The problem must instead specify the underlying structure. If Alpha is defined as the first member of a sequence beginning at zero, then Alpha = 0. If Alpha is defined as the negative asymptotic direction of a complete line, then Alpha corresponds to -infinity. If Alpha is a parameter, it may take some entirely different value.

This mathematical discipline provides a useful corrective to symbolic overreach. Theological language may inspire a mathematical analogy, but the analogy must still be formally defined.

5.6 The One-Sided Sequence

The strongest mathematical case for Alpha = 0 arises in a one-sided sequence with an initial value.

Consider

x_0 = 0,

x_1 = 1,

x_2 = 2,

x_3 = 3,

...

Here the system has a first indexed state. The index begins at zero, and every later state is generated from it.

A corresponding temporal model is

t >= 0.

In such a system, there are no allowed negative times. The variable is defined only from the initial instant forward. Alpha is therefore naturally associated with the first state:

Alpha = t = 0.

Omega may then be associated with long-term behavior as

t -> +infinity.

The structure becomes

Alpha = 0 -> finite development -> Omega as t -> +infinity.

This model is appropriate for an experiment beginning at a specified time, a computation initialized at step zero, a population model started from known initial conditions, or a cosmological model whose physical time begins at t = 0.

Euler would likely regard this as a clear and natural construction. Zero is not chosen because Alpha is metaphysically identical with nothingness. It is chosen because the system has been defined to begin there.

The weakness of the model appears when one asks whether t = 0 explains why the system exists. It does not. It specifies the first state within the model. It does not provide a cause for the model itself.

5.7 The Two-Sided Number Line

The strongest case for associating Alpha with negative infinity arises from the complete real-number line.

The structure is

-infinity < x < +infinity.

Here zero is not a boundary. It is an interior point. Values extend without bound in both directions.

If Omega is defined as the positive direction of unbounded increase, then Alpha may be defined as the negative direction of unbounded decrease. The relation is symmetrical:

Alpha <-> x -> -infinity,

Omega <-> x -> +infinity.

This interpretation is especially natural when x represents time. A process defined for all real times has neither a first nor a last finite moment:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

Alpha then describes the remote past, and Omega describes the remote future.

However, Euler would likely distinguish between saying that the line extends without bound and saying that -infinity is an ordinary number. The line does not contain a least real number. For every negative number x, there is another number x - 1 that is smaller.

Therefore,

there is no smallest real number.

Negative infinity functions as a limiting direction or ideal boundary, not as the first real number. Alpha would not literally be the first element of the real line because no such element exists.

This is the crucial difference between Alpha = 0 and Alpha <-> -infinity. Zero can be an actual initial member of a one-sided system. Negative infinity ordinarily represents the absence of any finite initial member.

5.8 Historical Restraint

Any reconstruction of what Euler would say must avoid attributing later mathematical theories to him without qualification. The modern concepts of rigorous epsilon-delta limits, Cantorian cardinality, transfinite ordinals, topological compactification, and alpha- and omega-limit sets were developed after Euler.

Euler certainly worked with infinity, infinitesimals, divergent series, and limiting processes. He also used methods that were extraordinarily successful. Yet his conceptual framework was not identical to modern analysis.

It would therefore be inaccurate to claim that Euler explicitly formulated the present Alpha–Omega problem in contemporary terms. The more defensible conclusion is that his mathematical practice suggests a method for answering it.

That method would proceed as follows:

define the variables,

specify the domain,

identify whether the domain has endpoints,

distinguish a member from a limiting direction,

and only then assign values to the symbols.

Under that method, the answer is conditional.

For a one-sided sequence,

Alpha = 0.

For a two-sided unbounded line,

Alpha <-> -infinity.

For a mathematical symbol without further definition,

Alpha is undetermined.

For a theological source beyond the mathematical system,

neither assignment is sufficient.

Euler's likely contribution is therefore not a single preferred value but a demand for formal clarity. He would ask what has been defined, what follows from the definition, and whether the proposed symbolism confuses an initial value with an unbounded direction.

The Eulerian lesson may be summarized as

symbols do not determine structures;

structures determine the meanings of symbols.

This principle supports the broader thesis of the paper. Alpha is zero only in a system with a first state identified as zero. Alpha corresponds to negative infinity only in a system extending without bound toward the negative direction. Theology introduces a third question concerning the source of the entire structure, a question that cannot be answered merely by selecting one of its numerical points.

6. Mathematical Structures That Produce Different Answers

6.1 Natural Numbers and a First Element

The natural numbers provide the clearest setting in which Alpha can be associated with a genuine beginning. Depending on convention, the sequence may be written as

0, 1, 2, 3, 4, ...

or

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...

In either convention, the natural numbers are ordered and possess a least element. The sequence begins, although it has no greatest finite member.

If counting begins at zero, then zero is the first element:

0 <= n

for every natural number n.

In this structure, Alpha may naturally be identified with zero because zero occupies an actual position within the set. It is not merely approached as a limit. It is present as the least member.

Omega, however, requires more care. The sequence of natural numbers does not end with an ordinary natural number called infinity. For every natural number n, another natural number n + 1 follows. Thus there is no largest natural number.

The structure is therefore asymmetrical:

there is a first element,

but there is no last finite element.

This asymmetry supports Alpha = 0 but does not automatically support Omega = infinity as an ordinary number. Omega may symbolize the direction of indefinite continuation, or it may be introduced through a different mathematical structure such as ordinal numbers.

The natural-number model is useful when discussing a process with a definite initialization. A computation may begin at step 0. A sequence may begin with term a_0. A clock may begin recording at t = 0. In such cases, Alpha is not merely symbolic. It corresponds to a defined initial state.

Yet this model also shows why Alpha and Omega need not be symmetrical. The first point can belong to the system even when no final point does.

6.2 Alpha as Zero in an Initialized Sequence

An initialized sequence is one in which a first state is explicitly specified. Let

x_0 = initial state.

The sequence then evolves through a rule such as

x_(n+1) = F(x_n).

The first state exists before any iteration of the rule. Every later state depends upon the initial condition and the transformation F.

If the index begins at zero, then Alpha can be represented as

Alpha = n = 0.

This assignment is mathematically natural because zero marks the state before any update has occurred. The sequence may be written as

x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3, ...

The long-term behavior may then be examined as

n -> +infinity.

This produces the structural pairing

Alpha = initial state at n = 0,

Omega = limiting behavior as n -> +infinity.

The distinction between state and index is important. Alpha may refer to the time coordinate n = 0, or it may refer to the actual initial state x_0. These are related but not identical.

For example, a population model might begin with

P_0 = 1000.

The Alpha of the process is not numerically zero if Alpha means the population state. Zero is only the initial index. The initial condition is 1000.

Thus even within an initialized model, one must ask whether Alpha names the coordinate or the content of the first state.

This distinction parallels the theological problem. The first moment of creation may be represented by t = 0, but the source of creation is not identical with that coordinate.

6.3 Integers and the Bi-Infinite Number Line

The integers form a fundamentally different structure:

..., -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, ...

Unlike the natural numbers, the integers have no least element and no greatest element. For every integer n, there exists a smaller integer n - 1 and a larger integer n + 1.

Therefore,

there is no first integer,

and there is no last integer.

In this structure, zero is central but not initial. It functions as the additive identity and as a reference point separating negative and positive values.

If Alpha and Omega are interpreted as the extreme directions of the integer line, the natural correspondence becomes

Alpha <-> n -> -infinity,

Omega <-> n -> +infinity.

This does not mean that -infinity and +infinity are integers. They describe the two directions in which the integers continue without bound.

The integer line therefore gives strong mathematical support to the association of Alpha with negative infinity. Yet it simultaneously removes the ordinary meaning of Alpha as a first element. There is no earliest integer from which the sequence begins.

This is the decisive conceptual difference:

Alpha = 0 implies a first member,

Alpha <-> -infinity implies no first finite member.

The two assignments do not merely choose different numbers. They describe different kinds of order.

6.4 The Real Line and Unbounded Direction

The real numbers extend the integer line into a continuous structure. Between any two distinct real numbers, infinitely many other real numbers exist.

The real line is written as

-infinity < x < +infinity.

Again, this notation does not imply that -infinity and +infinity are ordinary real numbers. It indicates that the set is unbounded in both directions.

A set is unbounded above if no finite number is greater than or equal to all its members. A set is unbounded below if no finite number is less than or equal to all its members.

The real line satisfies both conditions.

For every real x,

x + 1 is larger,

and

x - 1 is smaller.

Therefore, the real numbers possess neither a first nor a last element.

If time is modeled by the full real line, then no initial moment exists within the model:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

The past has no first instant, and the future has no last instant.

Alpha in this setting cannot mean an earliest temporal point. It can only indicate the negative-time direction or the limiting behavior observed as

t -> -infinity.

This makes the real line especially suitable for dynamical systems defined for all time. It is less suitable for a cosmology that asserts a definite beginning of physical time.

6.5 The Extended Real Numbers

Mathematicians sometimes enlarge the real numbers by adjoining two ideal elements:

-infinity and +infinity.

The resulting structure is called the extended real number system:

[-infinity, +infinity].

In this system,

-infinity <= x <= +infinity

for every real number x.

The extended real numbers are useful in analysis because they allow divergent limits and unbounded quantities to be expressed more compactly. For example, a function may satisfy

lim f(x) = +infinity.

Likewise, the infimum of an unbounded-below set may be written as

-infimum = -infinity

in an extended sense.

Once the infinities are adjoined, one may speak of -infinity and +infinity as boundary elements of the extended order. In that limited formal context, Alpha could be assigned to -infinity and Omega to +infinity.

The correspondence becomes

Alpha = -infinity,

Omega = +infinity.

However, this equality depends entirely upon the chosen extension. In the ordinary real numbers, neither infinity is a member. In the extended real numbers, they are added by definition.

Even then, arithmetic with infinity is restricted. Expressions such as

+infinity - +infinity

or

0 times +infinity

are generally indeterminate rather than ordinary numerical calculations.

Thus the extended real model provides the strongest formal version of Alpha = -infinity, but only under clearly stated conventions.

6.6 Ordinal Numbers and Omega

Ordinal numbers describe order type rather than ordinary magnitude. They answer questions about position in a well-ordered sequence.

The finite ordinals are

0, 1, 2, 3, ...

The first infinite ordinal is denoted by omega:

0, 1, 2, 3, ..., omega.

Here omega is not positive infinity on the real line. It is the order type of the natural numbers. It comes after every finite ordinal.

This creates an important structure in which there is a genuine first element, zero, and a genuine first infinite ordinal, omega.

Thus the most natural pairing is

Alpha = 0,

Omega = omega.

This model differs fundamentally from

Alpha = -infinity,

Omega = +infinity.

Ordinal order is one-sided and well-ordered. Every nonempty set of ordinals has a least element. Negative ordinals do not precede zero in the standard ordinal sequence.

Omega also does not terminate ordinal progression. After omega come

omega + 1,

omega + 2,

omega + 3,

and many larger ordinals.

Therefore, omega is not the greatest ordinal. It is the first infinite ordinal.

This produces another asymmetry. Omega may be an infinite stage, but it is not an ultimate endpoint. The ordinal sequence continues far beyond it.

Theological use of Omega as final fulfillment therefore differs from ordinal omega. Ordinal omega marks a first transfinite stage, not the absolute completion of all order.

6.7 Cardinal Infinity

Cardinal numbers describe the size of sets. The set of natural numbers has a countably infinite cardinality.

This cardinality is commonly denoted by

aleph_0.

The symbol does not describe direction, temporal order, or a final point. It describes how many elements belong to a set in the sense of one-to-one correspondence.

For example, the natural numbers and the even numbers have the same cardinality because the mapping

n -> 2n

pairs each natural number with exactly one even number.

Cardinal infinity therefore differs from both real-number infinity and ordinal omega.

Several distinct concepts must be separated:

+infinity as unbounded increase,

-infinity as unbounded decrease,

omega as the first infinite ordinal,

aleph_0 as the cardinality of the natural numbers.

These concepts answer different questions.

A theological Omega cannot be identified with aleph_0 without substantial qualification. Cardinality tells us nothing about purpose, completion, or divine fulfillment. Likewise, Alpha cannot be assigned a cardinal value merely because it signifies firstness.

The lesson is that the word infinity conceals several mathematically distinct ideas. Any attempt to map Alpha and Omega onto mathematics must identify which form of infinity is intended.

6.8 Why the Mathematical Domain Determines Alpha

The mathematical meaning of Alpha depends upon four features of the chosen domain:

the set of allowed values,

the ordering relation,

the presence or absence of endpoints,

and the interpretation assigned to the variable.

If the domain is the natural numbers beginning at zero, then

Alpha = 0

is natural.

If the domain is the integers or real numbers, there is no first element, and Alpha may instead be associated with

x -> -infinity.

If the domain is the extended real numbers, then -infinity may be formally included as the least boundary element.

If the domain is the ordinals, then zero is the least element and omega is the first infinite ordinal.

If the domain is a dynamical trajectory, Alpha may refer not to a number but to a set of states approached as time moves backward without bound.

These cases may be summarized as follows:

natural numbers:

Alpha = 0,

integers and real numbers:

Alpha <-> negative unbounded direction,

extended real numbers:

Alpha may be defined as -infinity,

ordinals:

Alpha = 0 and Omega = omega,

dynamical systems:

Alpha = limiting behavior as t -> -infinity.

No contradiction exists among these answers because they belong to different structures.

The error occurs when a conclusion valid in one domain is transferred into another without justification. Zero is a first element in some systems but not in all. Negative infinity is a boundary in some extensions but not an ordinary real number. Omega is an ordinal in one theory and a theological symbol in another.

The proper mathematical question is therefore not simply

What is Alpha?

It is

Within what domain, ordering, and interpretation is Alpha being defined?

Only after that question is answered can Alpha be assigned coherently.

This section confirms the central thesis of the paper. Alpha = 0 is correct for structures with a genuine initialized beginning. Alpha corresponds to -infinity in structures extending indefinitely toward the negative direction. Neither conclusion is universal, because mathematical meaning arises from formal context rather than from symbolic association alone.

7. Alpha-Limit and Omega-Limit Sets in Dynamical Systems

7.1 States, Trajectories, and Time

Dynamical systems provide the clearest mathematical framework in which Alpha is associated with the remote past and Omega with the remote future. A dynamical system describes how the state of a system changes over time. The state may represent the position and velocity of a particle, the populations of interacting species, the concentration of chemicals, the voltage in a circuit, the configuration of a fluid, or any other collection of variables sufficient to characterize the system at a given moment.

Let the state at time t be written as

x(t).

As time changes, x(t) traces a trajectory through a state space. The state space is the set of all possible configurations of the system. A point in that space represents one possible state, while a trajectory represents the history of a system evolving according to a rule.

For a continuous-time system, the evolution may be governed by a differential equation such as

dx/dt = F(x).

For a discrete-time system, the evolution may be governed by an iteration rule such as

x_(n+1) = F(x_n).

In either case, the central question is not only where the system is now, but where it came from and where it is going. Dynamical-systems theory formalizes these questions through alpha-limit and omega-limit sets.

If the system is defined only for t >= 0, then its history begins with an initial condition x(0). In that case, Alpha may be associated with the initial state. If the system is defined for all real times,

-infinity < t < +infinity,

then there need not be a first moment. The trajectory may instead have a remote past described by its behavior as

t -> -infinity.

This is the setting in which Alpha becomes naturally linked to negative infinity.

7.2 The Omega-Limit Set

The omega-limit set of a trajectory describes the states that the system approaches repeatedly or asymptotically as time moves toward the remote future.

Suppose x(t) is a trajectory. A point y belongs to the omega-limit set of x if there exists a sequence of times

t_1, t_2, t_3, ...

such that

t_n -> +infinity

and

x(t_n) -> y.

The omega-limit set therefore consists of all states that can be approached along some sequence of increasingly late times.

This definition is broader than the ordinary notion of convergence. If x(t) approaches a single equilibrium point p, then the omega-limit set is simply

{p}.

If the trajectory approaches a periodic orbit, then the omega-limit set may be the entire closed cycle rather than one point. If the system behaves chaotically, the omega-limit set may be a complicated invariant set containing infinitely many recurrent states.

The omega-limit set therefore records the long-term organization of the trajectory. It answers the question:

What states remain relevant as the finite details of the initial condition recede into the distant future?

The term Omega is appropriate because it concerns the forward-time destination of the system. Yet this destination need not be a final moment. The trajectory may never stop. Omega describes asymptotic behavior, not necessarily termination.

This is an important distinction for theological comparison. A mathematical omega-limit set may organize the future of a trajectory without representing a completed purpose. It is a structural end rather than automatically a meaningful or personal end.

7.3 The Alpha-Limit Set

The alpha-limit set is the backward-time counterpart of the omega-limit set. It describes the states approached by a trajectory as time moves toward the remote past.

A point y belongs to the alpha-limit set of x if there exists a sequence of times

t_1, t_2, t_3, ...

such that

t_n -> -infinity

and

x(t_n) -> y.

The alpha-limit set therefore answers the question:

What states organize the trajectory when it is followed indefinitely backward in time?

If a trajectory emerges from an unstable equilibrium, then that equilibrium may belong to its alpha-limit set. If the trajectory originates asymptotically from a periodic orbit, then the entire orbit may form the alpha-limit set. More complicated systems may possess alpha-limit sets with highly intricate structures.

The notation gives the strongest established mathematical association between Alpha and negative infinity:

Alpha concerns t -> -infinity.

Omega concerns t -> +infinity.

This association is not merely poetic. It is built into standard terminology in dynamical systems.

However, the alpha-limit set is not necessarily a literal beginning. A trajectory with an alpha-limit set may have no first moment. It may extend backward forever. The Alpha in this setting is not an initial point but an asymptotic structure in the remote past.

This is precisely why the alpha-limit concept differs from Alpha = 0. Zero marks a first time in an initialized process. The alpha-limit set describes backward behavior when no first finite time need exist.

7.4 Alpha Does Not Literally Equal Negative Infinity

Although alpha-limit behavior is defined through

t -> -infinity,

it would be imprecise to say simply that

Alpha = -infinity.

Alpha is not the time variable itself. Nor is the alpha-limit set a number. It is a set of states in the state space.

The more accurate correspondence is

alpha-limit set = states approached as t -> -infinity.

Likewise,

omega-limit set = states approached as t -> +infinity.

This distinction separates three different objects:

time,

the trajectory,

and the limit set.

Time tends toward negative or positive infinity. The trajectory evolves through the state space. The alpha- or omega-limit set contains the states approached in the corresponding temporal direction.

For example, suppose

x(t) -> p as t -> -infinity.

Then the alpha-limit set is

{p}.

The point p is not negative infinity. It is the state approached when time recedes without bound.

This clarification is essential because symbolic language can easily collapse relation into identity. Alpha is associated with negative infinity through the direction of time, but it does not become the number or ideal boundary -infinity.

Theological interpretation requires the same caution. To say that Alpha is associated with the remote past does not imply that God is a point infinitely far back in time. The mathematical relation is useful, but its metaphysical extension must be limited.

7.5 Attractors and Omega-Limits

An attractor is a set toward which nearby trajectories evolve over time. It may be a stable equilibrium, a periodic orbit, a torus, or a chaotic set.

Consider a stable equilibrium p satisfying

F(p) = 0.

If nearby trajectories satisfy

x(t) -> p as t -> +infinity,

then p acts as an attractor. The omega-limit set of each such trajectory is

{p}.

A periodic attractor produces a different result. The trajectory does not approach one fixed point. Instead, it approaches a repeating cycle. Its omega-limit set is the full periodic orbit.

Chaotic attractors are more complicated. Nearby trajectories may remain confined to a bounded region while displaying sensitive dependence on initial conditions. Their omega-limit sets may contain infinitely many unstable periodic orbits and a highly irregular geometric structure.

The concept of attraction is often invoked in discussions of Teilhard's Omega Point. Omega may be compared to an attractor toward which the evolutionary process converges. The analogy is suggestive because both concepts describe a future-oriented organization of trajectories.

Yet the differences are substantial. A mathematical attractor follows from equations defined on a state space. It does not possess consciousness, intention, personality, or value. Teilhard's Omega is personal, transcendent, and identified with Christ. It does not merely receive trajectories passively; it actively draws creation toward union.

The attractor analogy is therefore structurally useful but theologically incomplete.

7.6 Repellers and Alpha-Limits

A repeller is the forward-time counterpart of an attractor viewed in reverse. Trajectories move away from it as time increases, but may approach it as time decreases.

Suppose p is an unstable equilibrium. Nearby trajectories may satisfy

x(t) -> p as t -> -infinity

while moving away from p for increasing t.

Then p may be the alpha-limit set of those trajectories.

This structure can be represented as

p -> evolving trajectory -> future attractor.

In forward time, p acts as a source or repeller. In backward time, it acts as an attractor.

The idea is relevant to Alpha because it provides a mathematical model of a state from which trajectories emerge. Yet even here, p need not be a first moment. The trajectory may approach p asymptotically without ever beginning at p at any finite time.

Thus a repeller can function as an origin of organization without functioning as a chronological first event.

This distinction resembles the broader contrast between causal source and temporal beginning. A trajectory may be ordered by a repelling state in its remote past even if no finite moment can be identified as the absolute beginning.

However, the analogy should not be extended too far. A repeller is a state within the dynamical system. God as Alpha, in classical theology, is not one state among the possible states of creation.

7.7 Reversible and Irreversible Dynamics

The alpha-limit set is easiest to define when a system can be followed both forward and backward in time. Some systems are mathematically reversible. Given the present state, the equations determine both the future and the past.

Other systems are not reversible in this way. Dissipative processes, stochastic systems, biological evolution, and thermodynamic systems may lose information or admit many possible past histories. In such cases, backward evolution may be unstable, ambiguous, or physically impossible even when a formal mathematical extension exists.

This creates an important asymmetry between Alpha and Omega.

For many physical systems, predicting future tendencies is easier than reconstructing the exact remote past. Dissipation causes distinct initial states to converge toward the same attractor. Once they have converged, the earlier differences may no longer be recoverable.

Suppose many trajectories approach the same state p as

t -> +infinity.

The omega-limit set may be well defined and simple, even though tracing the system backward from p produces many possible histories.

In irreversible systems, Omega may therefore be more dynamically stable than Alpha. The future may converge toward a smaller set of possibilities, while the past branches into many reconstructions.

This asymmetry is relevant to theology and cosmology. A final convergence may be conceptually clearer than an infinite regress into the past. Teilhard's vision is strongly future-directed because increasing complexity and consciousness create a directional history. The process is not simply a reversible motion along a symmetrical line.

7.8 The Strongest Mathematical Case for Alpha and Negative Infinity

Dynamical-systems theory provides the strongest mathematically established reason to associate Alpha with negative infinity. The terminology directly links alpha-limit behavior with

t -> -infinity

and omega-limit behavior with

t -> +infinity.

This yields the structural pairing

Alpha <-> remote past behavior,

Omega <-> remote future behavior.

The correspondence is especially compelling for systems defined over all real time. In such systems, there is no first finite moment. Alpha cannot be represented by zero unless zero is chosen merely as an arbitrary reference point.

The distinction may be summarized as follows.

For an initialized process,

t >= 0,

Alpha = initial state at t = 0.

For a bi-infinite trajectory,

-infinity < t < +infinity,

Alpha = alpha-limit behavior as t -> -infinity.

The first model treats Alpha as a beginning. The second treats Alpha as a past limit.

Dynamical systems therefore answer the original question in a conditional but precise manner. Someone working in this field would not ordinarily say that Alpha is numerically equal to negative infinity. They would say that the alpha-limit set describes what the system approaches as time tends toward negative infinity.

This is the clearest legitimate mathematical basis for choosing negative infinity over zero. It applies when the modeled process has no first time and when Alpha refers to asymptotic past behavior rather than an initial condition.

The theological meaning remains different. A mathematical alpha-limit set belongs to the system it describes. It may be a point, cycle, or more complicated invariant set. Divine Alpha, by contrast, names the source of the system's existence and intelligibility.

The comparison nevertheless reveals an important conceptual possibility. Alpha need not always mean first finite point. It can mean the organizing horizon of the remote past. Omega need not always mean last finite point. It can mean the organizing horizon of the remote future.

Dynamical systems thus provide a rigorous framework for the symbolic line

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

present trajectory,

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

This framework does not settle the theological question, but it establishes that associating Alpha with negative infinity is mathematically coherent and already embedded in recognized scientific terminology.

8. Cosmological Models and the Location of Alpha

8.1 A Universe with a Finite Beginning

A cosmological model with a finite beginning treats cosmic time as having an earliest boundary. The simplest representation is

t >= 0.

In this framework, t = 0 marks the beginning of the modeled history of the universe. All physically meaningful times lie on one side of that boundary. There is no earlier time within the model.

This structure makes zero the natural mathematical candidate for Alpha:

Alpha = t = 0.

Such a model resembles an initialized dynamical system. The universe begins from an initial state and evolves through later stages. The sequence may be represented schematically as

initial state -> expansion -> structure formation -> stars -> planets -> life -> consciousness.

The identification of Alpha with zero is especially attractive because it preserves the ordinary meaning of beginning. There is a first temporal boundary, and cosmic history proceeds from it.

Yet even in a finite-age universe, t = 0 may not be an ordinary moment. The equations may become undefined there, physical quantities may diverge, or the concept of classical spacetime may cease to apply. In that case, zero marks the boundary of the model rather than a fully described physical state.

A finite temporal beginning therefore supports Alpha = 0 at the level of mathematical representation. It does not by itself explain what the boundary means physically or metaphysically.

8.2 Does t = 0 Represent Creation?

The equation

t = 0

does not automatically mean creation ex nihilo. It may indicate the earliest time to which a cosmological model can be extended, the onset of an expansion phase, or the breakdown of a particular theory.

A cosmological model describes relations among measurable quantities. It may specify density, temperature, curvature, expansion, or quantum states. The theological doctrine of creation asks a different question: why does any universe, law, field, spacetime, or physical possibility exist at all?

The distinction can be stated as

t = 0 describes a temporal boundary,

creation describes ontological dependence.

A model may have a finite first time without identifying a divine cause. Conversely, theology may affirm creation even if the universe has no first temporal moment.

This distinction prevents the beginning of physical time from being equated too quickly with the divine Alpha. If t = 0 is the first physical moment, it belongs to the created order. God as Alpha would be the source of that order, not merely a state located at its boundary.

Theology may interpret a finite beginning as compatible with creation, but cosmological finitude does not constitute a mathematical proof of creation. The two concepts operate at different explanatory levels.

8.3 A Past-Eternal Universe

A past-eternal universe extends indefinitely backward in time:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

Such a universe has no first moment. For every time t, an earlier time exists. The question “What was the first event?” has no answer because the model contains no first event.

In this structure, zero may still be used as a reference point, but it has no privileged status. One can choose t = 0 to represent the present, a transition, or any convenient epoch. The coordinate origin is conventional rather than absolute.

The natural Alpha correspondence becomes

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity.

Here Alpha represents the indefinitely remote past rather than an initial state. The universe does not begin at Alpha as a first finite moment. Instead, Alpha names a limiting direction.

A past-eternal cosmos may seem to remove the need for a beginning, but it removes only a temporal beginning. It does not necessarily answer why the universe exists, why it has its laws, or why it possesses its particular structure.

Theological creation and temporal beginning must therefore remain distinct. A universe can be finite in age and created, or past-eternal and still created in the sense of depending upon a divine source.

This point follows the classical distinction between temporal priority and ontological priority. Negative infinity can replace zero as the mathematical horizon of the past without replacing the question of ultimate origin.

8.4 Cyclic and Oscillatory Cosmologies

Cyclic cosmologies replace a single linear history with repeated phases. The universe may expand, contract, and expand again. More abstractly, cosmic evolution may pass through recurring states:

expansion -> contraction -> bounce -> expansion.

If the cycles continue indefinitely into both past and future, the model has no unique first Alpha and no final Omega. Each cycle has a local beginning and end, but the total process does not.

This creates two levels of interpretation.

At the local level, the beginning of a cycle may be assigned

t = 0.

Alpha then marks the start of one cosmic epoch.

At the global level, the sequence of cycles may extend toward

t -> -infinity

and

t -> +infinity.

Alpha and Omega then become asymptotic directions rather than unique events.

A perfectly periodic model might be represented as

x(t + T) = x(t),

where T is the duration of one cycle.

In such a system, no state is absolutely first or last. Every phase is followed by another recurrence. The traditional theological meaning of Omega as final consummation is difficult to represent because the process never reaches an irreversible completion.

Teilhard's evolutionary theology also sits uneasily with strict repetition. His cosmogenesis is directional. Matter develops toward life, consciousness, and greater unification. A universe that returns eternally to the same condition would lack the cumulative novelty essential to his vision.

A cyclic universe can nevertheless have direction if each cycle differs from the previous one. The cycles might generate increasing complexity, changing physical conditions, or cumulative information. In that case, repetition and development coexist.

8.5 Bounce Cosmologies

A bounce cosmology proposes that the present expanding universe was preceded by a contracting phase. Instead of beginning at an absolute singularity, the universe passes through a minimum scale and then re-expands.

The structure may be represented as

contraction -> bounce -> expansion.

The bounce may be assigned t = 0:

t < 0 for contraction,

t = 0 for the bounce,

t > 0 for expansion.

In this model, zero is a transition rather than an absolute beginning. Physical history exists on both sides of it.

This distinction is important for Alpha. If Alpha means the beginning of the current expansion, then Alpha = 0 is appropriate. If Alpha means the ultimate beginning of all cosmic history, the bounce does not provide it.

A bounce may therefore be a local Alpha without being an absolute Alpha.

The situation resembles a calendar reset. A new epoch begins at zero, but the larger history continues through the boundary. The coordinate marks a transformation in the system rather than creation from nothing.

If contraction extends indefinitely into the past, then the global Alpha is associated with t -> -infinity. If the contracting phase itself began at an earlier boundary, then Alpha may lie there instead.

Bounce cosmologies demonstrate that the meaning of zero depends upon what is being measured. Zero can mark an origin, a midpoint, a turning point, or a convention.

8.6 Emergent-Time Models

Some cosmological and philosophical models suggest that time may not be fundamental. Instead, temporal order may emerge from a deeper level of reality described by relations, quantum states, information, geometry, or some non-temporal structure.

In such a model, asking what happened before time began may be inappropriate. The word "before" presupposes the temporal relation whose origin is being questioned.

The structure is not simply

earlier time -> t = 0 -> later time.

It is closer to

non-temporal structure -> emergence of temporal order.

The arrow again should not be understood as ordinary temporal succession. It indicates derivation or dependence.

This type of model resembles the classical theological distinction between chronological and ontological priority. A deeper structure may be prior to time without existing at an earlier time.

Alpha in an emergent-time model cannot be identified straightforwardly with either zero or negative infinity. Zero may mark the first meaningful temporal coordinate after time emerges. Negative infinity may have no application if there is no earlier temporal direction.

The deeper Alpha would instead correspond to the source or condition from which temporality arises.

This does not mean that a physical pre-temporal structure is identical with God. It means only that cosmology itself may require forms of priority that are not temporal. The analogy helps clarify why theological Alpha need not occupy a position on a timeline.

8.7 The Beginning of Our Epoch Versus the Beginning of Being

Cosmological language often uses the word "beginning" for several different boundaries. A beginning may be the start of the present expansion, the earliest time described by classical relativity, the onset of a quantum phase, the formation of spacetime, or the origin of all reality.

These meanings must be distinguished.

The beginning of our cosmic epoch may be represented as

t_epoch = 0.

This coordinate may describe the transition into the universe as presently observed.

The beginning of physical spacetime would be a stronger claim. It would mean that no physical temporal order exists beyond the boundary.

The beginning of being is stronger still. It asks why anything exists rather than nothing. This is not merely a question about the earliest physical state.

A cosmological theory may successfully describe the beginning of one epoch without explaining the beginning of spacetime. It may describe the emergence of spacetime without explaining the existence of the deeper laws or structures from which spacetime emerges.

Thus one must not infer

beginning of current expansion = beginning of all being.

The distinction also affects the use of Alpha. There can be multiple local Alphas within one larger history. A star has a beginning, a biological species has a beginning, a civilization has a beginning, and a cosmic expansion phase may have a beginning. None is necessarily the absolute source of existence.

Theological Alpha refers to the most fundamental level: not merely the first stage within reality, but the source upon which reality as a whole depends.

8.8 When Cosmology Favors Zero and When It Favors Negative Infinity

Cosmology favors zero when the model contains a genuine first temporal boundary. If physical time begins at t = 0 and the domain is

t >= 0,

then Alpha = 0 is the natural mathematical representation.

Cosmology favors negative infinity when the model is past-eternal:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

In that case, Alpha is not a first moment but the limiting direction of the indefinitely remote past.

Cyclic and bounce models produce mixed answers. The beginning of a particular cycle or expansion phase may be assigned zero, while the total history may extend toward negative infinity. Emergent-time models may make both choices incomplete because the source of temporal order is not itself temporal.

The major possibilities can be summarized as follows:

finite-beginning cosmology:

Alpha = 0,

past-eternal cosmology:

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

cyclic cosmology:

local Alpha = beginning of a cycle,

global Alpha may not exist,

bounce cosmology:

t = 0 marks a transition,

emergent-time cosmology:

Alpha may name a non-temporal source of time.

These models show why no cosmological answer is universal. The value assigned to Alpha depends upon the temporal architecture of the theory.

They also show why cosmology cannot settle the full theological question. Whether time begins at zero, extends toward negative infinity, repeats through cycles, or emerges from a deeper structure, one may still ask why that entire order exists.

Theological Alpha addresses this deeper dependence. Cosmological Alpha identifies a boundary, direction, phase, or origin within a model. The two may be related, but they are not identical.

The most careful conclusion is therefore conditional. Zero is appropriate when the universe has a first modeled moment. Negative infinity is appropriate when cosmic history extends without beginning. Neither number alone expresses the ontological source of the cosmos.

Cosmology determines the shape of the timeline. Theology asks why there is a timeline, a law, a cosmos, or a capacity for becoming at all.

9. Category Errors in Translating Theology into Mathematics

9.1 Symbolic Correspondence Is Not Numerical Identity

The comparison between Alpha and zero, or between Omega and infinity, can be illuminating only if symbolic correspondence is distinguished from numerical identity. A symbol may resemble a mathematical structure without being reducible to it.

When theologians call God Alpha, they are not ordinarily assigning God a numerical value. They are expressing divine priority, source, sovereignty, and comprehensiveness. Likewise, when God is called Omega, the claim concerns fulfillment, final authority, and the completion of creation.

A mathematical analogy might write

Alpha <-> origin

or

Omega <-> limit.

The double arrow indicates correspondence rather than equality. It suggests that two concepts share a structural relation while remaining different in nature.

By contrast, the equations

Alpha = 0

and

Omega = +infinity

make stronger claims. They suggest that the theological symbols can be identified directly with mathematical objects. Such equations may be useful within a narrowly defined model, but they should not be treated as complete theological definitions.

The same caution applies to negative infinity. In dynamical systems, Alpha is associated with behavior as

t -> -infinity.

This is a precise mathematical relation. It does not imply that divine Alpha is numerically equal to negative infinity.

A category error occurs when concepts belonging to different kinds of discourse are treated as though they were members of the same formal system. Theology asks about being, purpose, dependence, and divine identity. Mathematics defines structures, relations, quantities,

transformations, and limits. The two domains may illuminate one another, but neither can be translated into the other without remainder.

9.2 Infinity Is Not One Concept

The word infinity is frequently used as though it named one simple idea. In mathematics, philosophy, cosmology, and theology, however, infinity can mean several fundamentally different things.

It may mean unbounded increase:

x -> +infinity.

It may mean unbounded decrease:

x -> -infinity.

It may mean the cardinality of an infinite set:

aleph_0.

It may mean the first infinite ordinal:

omega.

It may mean endless temporal duration:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

It may mean an asymptotic direction in which a variable grows or a trajectory evolves.

It may also be used theologically to indicate divine inexhaustibility or transcendence. This theological use is not automatically equivalent to any mathematical form.

An infinitely old universe is not the same as an infinite set. An infinite set is not the same as an unbounded function. An unbounded function is not the same as divine eternity. Ordinal omega is not the same as positive infinity on the extended real line.

Therefore, the statement “Omega is infinity” is incomplete. One must ask:

Which infinity?

If Omega means endless future time, then Omega corresponds to t -> +infinity.

If Omega means the first infinite ordinal, then Omega may be represented by omega.

If Omega means theological fulfillment, mathematical infinity may be only a partial analogy.

The failure to distinguish these meanings creates false clarity. A single familiar word conceals several structures that cannot be interchanged without argument.

9.3 Zero Is Not Absolute Nothingness

Zero is often treated symbolically as nothing. This is understandable but mathematically imprecise. Zero is a defined object within a formal system. It possesses relations, properties, and operations.

Zero satisfies

$x + 0 = x$.

It functions as a coordinate origin, a balance point, a placeholder, a boundary, and a numerical value.

Absolute nothingness, by contrast, is not a number and does not possess mathematical properties. It is not a point on a number line. It cannot be added, multiplied, ordered, or measured.

This distinction is essential when discussing creation ex nihilo. The theological claim is not that the universe was created from the number zero. Nor does it imply that nothingness existed as a state and later transformed into matter.

The schematic expression

0 -> universe

is therefore potentially misleading. It may be useful if zero represents the absence of a measured quantity or the first coordinate of cosmic time. It is not a literal description of creation from nothing.

A more accurate theological relation is

God -> created reality.

Zero may represent the first temporal boundary within created reality, but it is not the source of reality.

Thus Alpha = 0 may be mathematically correct for an initialized model while remaining metaphysically incomplete. Zero marks where the model begins. It does not explain why the model exists.

9.4 Negative Infinity Is Not an Infinitely Old Moment

Negative infinity is often imagined as a date located infinitely far in the past. This image is misleading.

In the ordinary real numbers, -infinity is not a real number. It is not a temporal coordinate that can be reached after moving backward through sufficiently many years. It expresses unbounded recession.

When one writes

t -> -infinity,

one means that t becomes less than any finite bound. There is no final step at which t arrives at negative infinity.

This distinction matters for the Alpha question. If Alpha is associated with negative infinity, Alpha does not become the first moment of time. On the contrary, a timeline extending toward negative infinity has no first moment.

For every time t, an earlier time exists:

t - 1 < t.

Thus the model

-infinity < t < +infinity

eliminates an initial finite boundary.

Negative infinity therefore represents the absence of a first temporal point, not an infinitely distant first point.

This has theological consequences. God cannot be placed at t = -infinity as though divine existence occupied the earliest possible date. There is no such date in the model. Moreover, God as ontological source is not explained by extending the timeline indefinitely backward.

An infinite regress of moments may remove the need for a first moment, but it does not answer why the entire temporal order exists.

9.5 An Endpoint Is Not Necessarily a Goal

Mathematical and theological uses of the word end must also be distinguished. An end may be a terminal boundary, but it may also be a goal, purpose, or fulfillment.

Suppose a process stops at time T:

$0 <= t <= T$.

Then T is a final temporal boundary. Nothing follows within the model. Yet the process may stop because of failure, exhaustion, interruption, or arbitrary termination. A last point does not automatically possess meaning.

Theological Omega is usually teleological. It concerns the purpose toward which creation is directed. The end is not merely where events cease. It is where they reach fulfillment.

This difference may be expressed as

termination is not identical to consummation.

A mathematical endpoint answers the question:

Where does the domain stop?

A theological final end answers the question:

For what purpose does the process exist, and in what does it reach completion?

Teilhard's Omega Point is therefore not simply the last cosmic event. It is a center of convergence and fulfillment. If the universe ended through random collapse without personal or spiritual integration, that terminal event would not constitute Teilhardian Omega.

Likewise, positive infinity is not automatically a goal. A quantity can grow without bound without approaching any meaningful completion.

The sequence

1, 2, 3, 4, ...

continues indefinitely, but continuation alone does not establish purpose.

9.6 An Attractor Is Not Automatically God

The concept of an attractor offers one of the most powerful mathematical analogies for Omega. An attractor organizes the future behavior of trajectories. Nearby states evolve toward it, and long-term behavior becomes constrained by its structure.

This resembles Teilhard's idea of Omega as a center drawing creation toward unity. Yet the analogy can easily become a category error.

A mathematical attractor is defined within a state space and generated by equations. It may be a fixed point, periodic orbit, torus, or chaotic set. It has no necessary consciousness, freedom, intention, value, or personality.

God, in classical theology, is not a state within the universe's phase space. God is not one possible configuration among others. Nor is divine action simply the mechanical output of differential equations.

If Omega is modeled as an attractor A, one may write

x(t) -> A as t -> +infinity.

This expresses convergence. It does not establish that A is divine.

The attractor analogy becomes more useful when treated structurally. It helps describe how a future-oriented center can organize present trajectories. It does not explain personality, love, transcendence, or grace.

Teilhard's Omega is therefore more than an attractor. It is personal and Christological. The analogy captures convergence but not the full theological content of the destination.

9.7 The Dangers of False Precision

Mathematical notation can create an appearance of exactness even when the underlying concepts remain ambiguous. Writing

Alpha = 0

or

Omega = +infinity

may look rigorous, but the symbols are only as precise as their definitions.

If Alpha means the first coordinate of a sequence, the equation may be exact.

If Alpha means the divine source of being, the equation becomes metaphorical.

If Omega means the future limit of a trajectory, a mathematical definition may be available.

If Omega means the consummation of creation in Christ, the symbol expresses theological meaning that cannot be captured completely by a number.

False precision occurs when notation conceals unresolved assumptions. A formula may omit questions about the domain, the meaning of time, the existence of endpoints, or the difference between physical and metaphysical causation.

For example,

Alpha = -infinity

may conceal at least four possibilities:

Alpha is the least element of an extended order,

Alpha is the negative direction of a real line,

Alpha is the remote past of a trajectory,

or Alpha is a theological source located before all time.

These claims are not equivalent.

Precision therefore requires more than equations. It requires explicit definitions and disciplined limits on interpretation.

9.8 The Constructive Use of Analogy

The danger of category error does not mean that mathematics and theology must remain completely isolated. Analogy can be intellectually productive when its scope is clearly stated.

Zero can clarify the idea of an initial condition.

Negative infinity can clarify the idea of a past without a first moment.

An alpha-limit set can clarify the distinction between a chronological beginning and remote-past organization.

An omega-limit set can clarify how future behavior may converge without terminating at a finite time.

An attractor can clarify how a goal-like structure organizes trajectories.

Ordinal omega can clarify the difference between finite succession and the first transfinite stage.

Each analogy illuminates one structural feature while leaving others untouched.

The constructive procedure is therefore:

identify the mathematical structure,

state the theological concept,

specify the shared relation,

and identify where the analogy fails.

For example:

Mathematical attractor: organizes the long-term behavior of trajectories.

Teilhardian Omega: organizes cosmic convergence toward personal union.

Shared feature: future-oriented convergence.

Limit of analogy: a mathematical attractor is not necessarily conscious, personal, transcendent, or loving.

Likewise:

Zero: first coordinate in an initialized system.

Theological Alpha: source of created existence.

Shared feature: origin.

Limit of analogy: zero belongs to the system, while divine Alpha is not merely one element within creation.

Careful analogy therefore produces clarification rather than reduction. It allows mathematics to sharpen distinctions among beginning, direction, limit, convergence, and completion. It allows theology to raise questions of source, purpose, and meaning that formal structures do not answer by themselves.

The central methodological rule is simple:

correspondence does not imply identity.

Alpha may correspond to zero without being reducible to zero. Alpha may correspond to the direction t -> -infinity without being identical to negative infinity. Omega may resemble an attractor without being merely a mathematical set. Divine eternity may be called infinite without being equivalent to endless chronological duration.

Once these boundaries are maintained, mathematical theology becomes more rigorous rather than less. Its purpose is not to convert God into a variable or salvation into a limit theorem. Its purpose is to use formal structures to clarify the different meanings of origin, history, convergence, and fulfillment.

The resulting framework preserves both mathematical discipline and theological depth. Mathematics determines what follows from a defined structure. Theology addresses questions of being, dependence, value, and final purpose. Their dialogue is most fruitful when neither is mistaken for the other.

10. Three Formal Models of Alpha and Omega

10.1 Model I: The Created Ray

The first formal model represents reality as a one-sided temporal process with a definite beginning. The simplest structure is

0 <= t < +infinity.

In this model, Alpha is assigned to the initial boundary:

Alpha = 0.

The universe begins at t = 0 and develops through later times. There are no valid negative times within the model. Omega is not necessarily a final point contained in the timeline. It may instead represent the indefinitely remote future:

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

The created-ray model is mathematically natural for any process with an initial condition. A computation begins at step zero. An experiment begins when measurement starts. A population model begins with a specified initial population. A cosmological model may begin with an earliest temporal boundary.

The model may be represented as

Alpha = 0 -> finite history -> t -> +infinity.

Its principal strength is clarity. It preserves the ordinary meaning of Alpha as beginning. There is a first modeled moment, and every later state follows from it.

The model is also compatible with a theological doctrine of finite creation, provided that t = 0 is not identified directly with God. The first moment belongs to the created order. Divine Alpha would be the cause of that moment and of the temporal structure in which it appears.

The model therefore contains two distinct levels:

physical Alpha = first temporal boundary,

theological Alpha = source of the boundary and of time itself.

The main weakness of the created-ray model is that it may encourage confusion between initialization and ultimate explanation. Setting t = 0 defines where a model begins. It does not explain why the model exists, why its laws hold, or why the initial condition has its particular form.

The model also creates an asymmetry between Alpha and Omega. Alpha is an actual finite boundary, whereas Omega may remain only an unbounded direction. If Omega is interpreted as theological consummation, then the model must include more than endless temporal continuation. It must allow for some form of fulfillment that is not merely “more time.”

10.2 Model II: The Bi-Infinite Timeline

The second model represents reality as extending indefinitely in both temporal directions:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

In this structure, zero is an interior reference point rather than an absolute beginning. It may represent the present, a conventional epoch, or a transition between phases.

Alpha and Omega are associated with opposite limiting directions:

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

The bi-infinite model is appropriate for a past-eternal and future-eternal process. There is no first moment and no last moment. For every finite time t, an earlier and a later time exist.

This model provides the strongest symmetry between Alpha and Omega. Alpha names the remote past, and Omega names the remote future. The two symbols function as opposite temporal horizons.

The model is especially natural in dynamical systems. A trajectory x(t) defined for all real t may possess an alpha-limit set describing its behavior as t -> -infinity and an omega-limit set describing its behavior as t -> +infinity.

The structure may be written as

alpha-limit <- trajectory x(t) -> omega-limit.

The principal strength of this model is its formal symmetry. It gives Alpha and Omega parallel mathematical roles. Neither is a finite member of the timeline. Each names a limiting direction and the associated long-term behavior.

Its principal weakness is theological. Classical Christian theology does not define Alpha merely as the remote past or Omega merely as the remote future. Divine Alpha is the source of temporal existence, whether or not time has a first moment. Divine Omega is the fulfillment of creation, not merely an endless continuation toward later times.

The bi-infinite model also lacks a true beginning. If Alpha is supposed to mean the first temporal event, then this model cannot supply one. Negative infinity is not a first moment. It expresses the absence of a first finite time.

The model is therefore appropriate when the question is

How does a process behave in the indefinitely remote past and future?

It is less appropriate when the question is

Why does the process exist, and toward what meaningful end is it ordered?

10.3 Model III: Source, Process, and Fulfillment

The third model treats Alpha and Omega as metaphysical and theological relations rather than numerical coordinates.

Its basic structure is

Alpha -> creation and history -> Omega.

Here Alpha means source, and Omega means fulfillment. The middle term represents the temporal, evolutionary, moral, and spiritual development of creation.

Unlike the created-ray model, this structure does not require Alpha to be located at t = 0. Unlike the bi-infinite model, it does not place Alpha at t -> -infinity. Alpha stands for that upon which the whole temporal order depends.

Likewise, Omega does not mean merely t -> +infinity. It means the final end in the sense of purpose, consummation, and completed relation to God.

The structure is therefore causal and teleological:

Alpha = that from which creation derives,

Omega = that toward which creation is fulfilled.

The arrows should not be interpreted as ordinary mathematical operations. They represent dependence and orientation.

This model can accommodate either a finite or past-eternal universe. If time begins at zero, the whole ray depends upon Alpha. If time extends toward negative infinity, the whole line still depends upon Alpha.

The model can therefore be written more generally as

Alpha -> temporal order T -> Omega,

where T may be

[0, +infinity)

or

(-infinity, +infinity).

The theological claim does not depend upon which temporal domain is chosen.

The principal strength of this model is that it preserves the distinction between chronology and ontology. It also captures the difference between a terminal boundary and a purposeful end.

Its weakness is formal. Alpha and Omega cannot be represented as ordinary members of the same mathematical set as the events of history. The model is conceptually rich but not reducible to a single equation.

This is not necessarily a defect. It may instead indicate that the theological question exceeds the scope of numerical representation.

10.4 Model IV: The Teilhardian Convergence

The fourth model expresses Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary vision. It represents the cosmos as an ordered process of increasing complexity, consciousness, and unification:

matter -> life -> consciousness -> noosphere -> Omega.

This model differs from the created ray because its emphasis is not merely temporal succession. It is developmental and directional. Later stages contain forms of organization that were absent or only latent in earlier stages.

It also differs from the bi-infinite timeline because Omega is not simply the remote future. Omega is a center of convergence. It gives direction to the process and is already active within it.

The model may therefore be expanded as

Alpha -> cosmogenesis -> biogenesis -> noogenesis -> Christogenesis -> Omega.

Alpha represents the divine source of the process. Cosmogenesis represents the development of the universe. Biogenesis represents the emergence of life. Noogenesis represents the emergence of reflective thought. Christogenesis represents the unification of creation in Christ. Omega represents final personal convergence.

The Teilhardian model contains both historical and transcendent dimensions. The process unfolds in time, but its origin and fulfillment are not exhausted by temporal coordinates.

Omega resembles an attractor in that it organizes future convergence. Yet Teilhard's Omega differs from a mathematical attractor because it is personal and identified with Christ.

The model therefore combines three forms of relation:

causal dependence upon Alpha,

historical development through evolution,

teleological attraction toward Omega.

Its principal strength is that it integrates scientific development with theological purpose. Its principal weakness is the danger of interpreting evolutionary direction as mechanically inevitable or treating spiritual fulfillment as an automatic consequence of complexity.

The model requires freedom, personality, and love to remain essential. Convergence cannot mean the erasure of distinction or the mechanical absorption of persons into an impersonal whole.

10.5 Comparing the Models

The four models answer different questions.

The created ray asks:

Does the process have a first temporal state?

Its answer is

Alpha = 0.

The bi-infinite timeline asks:

How does the process behave toward the indefinitely remote past and future?

Its answer is

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

The source-process-fulfillment model asks:

What grounds the existence of the process, and toward what end is it ordered?

Its answer is

Alpha = ontological source,

Omega = teleological fulfillment.

The Teilhardian convergence model asks:

How might cosmic evolution develop toward increasing consciousness and personal unity?

Its answer is

Alpha -> cosmogenesis -> consciousness -> Omega.

The models can also be compared by their treatment of endpoints.

In the created ray, Alpha is an actual boundary.

In the bi-infinite timeline, Alpha is a limiting direction.

In the theological model, Alpha is not a temporal endpoint at all.

In the Teilhardian model, Alpha is the divine source of an evolutionary trajectory.

Their treatments of Omega also differ.

In the created ray, Omega may be an indefinitely remote future.

In the bi-infinite model, Omega is future asymptotic behavior.

In the theological model, Omega is final fulfillment.

In the Teilhardian model, Omega is a personal center of convergence.

The differences reveal that the same vocabulary can conceal distinct logical structures. Each model is coherent when used for the question it was designed to answer. Confusion arises when conclusions are transferred from one model to another without qualification.

10.6 Choosing a Model by the Question Being Asked

The proper model depends upon the type of question under consideration.

If the question concerns initialization, use the created ray:

0 <= t < +infinity.

If the question concerns a process with no first moment, use the bi-infinite timeline:

-infinity < t < +infinity.

If the question concerns remote-past and remote-future behavior, use alpha- and omega-limit sets.

If the question concerns the cause of temporal existence, use the source-process-fulfillment model.

If the question concerns evolutionary direction toward increasing consciousness and unity, use the Teilhardian convergence model.

A useful decision procedure is therefore:

Does the system have a first state?

If yes, Alpha may be zero.

Does the system extend indefinitely backward?

If yes, Alpha may be associated with t -> -infinity.

Does Alpha name the cause of the entire system?

If yes, neither zero nor negative infinity is sufficient.

Does Omega name unbounded continuation?

If yes, associate it with t -> +infinity.

Does Omega name a completed purpose?

If yes, infinity alone is insufficient.

This procedure prevents the symbolic language from outrunning the formal structure.

The final comparison can be summarized as follows:

Model I:

Alpha = 0,

best for initialized processes.

Model II:

Alpha <-> -infinity,

best for bi-infinite trajectories.

Model III:

Alpha = source beyond the timeline,

best for classical theology.

Model IV:

Alpha = divine source of cosmogenesis,

Omega = personal convergence in Christ,

best for Teilhardian theology.

No one model replaces the others. Each isolates a different meaning of beginning and end.

The strongest synthesis is therefore layered rather than exclusive. A cosmological model may assign the first physical time to zero. A dynamical analysis may associate remote-past behavior with negative infinity. A theological interpretation may identify Alpha with the source of the whole process. A Teilhardian interpretation may understand Omega as the personal attractor of cosmic convergence.

The resulting structure is

physical beginning: t = 0,

dynamical past horizon: t -> -infinity,

ontological Alpha: source of being,

Teilhardian Omega: personal fulfillment of becoming.

This layered model preserves the legitimacy of each domain while preventing any one formalism from claiming more than it can establish.

11. Toward a Teilhardian Dynamical Theology

11.1 Omega as an Attractor Analogy

Teilhard's Omega Point can be compared cautiously with an attractor in dynamical systems. An attractor is a state or set toward which trajectories evolve over time. Its presence organizes the long-term behavior of systems even when their initial conditions differ.

The simplest mathematical form is

x(t) -> A as t -> +infinity,

where A is the attractor.

This relation resembles Teilhard's vision of creation converging toward Omega. Matter develops into life, life into reflective consciousness, and consciousness into increasingly complex networks of communication and union. The final direction is not random dispersion but convergence.

The analogy becomes especially useful when an attractor is understood not merely as a final location but as a structure influencing the entire trajectory. The future form of the system constrains the range of its possible development. In a similar way, Omega gives Teilhard's cosmogenesis a direction and intelligibility.

Yet the analogy has limits. A mathematical attractor is ordinarily impersonal. It does not choose, love, know, or call. It follows from the equations of the system. Teilhard's Omega, by contrast, is personal, transcendent, and identified with Christ.

The mathematically cautious statement is therefore

Omega resembles an attractor in its role as a center of convergence.

The theological statement is stronger:

Omega is a personal center capable of drawing persons into union while preserving their distinct identities.

The attractor analogy explains convergence, but not personality, freedom, grace, or love.

11.2 Alpha as an Initial Condition

If Omega is compared with an attractor, Alpha may initially seem to correspond to an initial condition. A dynamical system begins with a state such as

$x(0) = x_0$.

The subsequent trajectory depends upon both this initial state and the governing rule:

$dx/dt = F(x)$.

A cosmological analogy might therefore identify Alpha with the earliest state of the universe. The developmental structure would become

x_0 -> cosmic evolution -> Omega.

This model has some value. It emphasizes that later states emerge from earlier conditions and that the historical path matters. Matter, life, consciousness, and culture do not appear independently of prior stages.

Nevertheless, divine Alpha cannot be reduced to x_0. The initial condition belongs to the system. It is one state within the state space. Classical theology understands God as the source of the state space, the laws, the initial condition, and the existence of the system itself.

The distinction may be expressed as

physical Alpha = x_0,

divine Alpha = source of x_0, F, time, and the system.

Teilhard's Alpha is therefore more than the primitive state of cosmogenesis. It is the creative ground from which the process receives existence and developmental potential.

An initial condition answers the question:

From what physical state did the modeled process begin?

Divine Alpha answers the deeper question:

Why is there a process, a state space, a law of development, or a capacity for emergence at all?

The initial-condition analogy is useful only when these two levels remain distinct.

11.3 Alpha as a Source or Repeller

A second dynamical analogy identifies Alpha not with a finite initial state but with a source or repeller. A repeller is a state from which nearby trajectories move away as time increases.

Suppose p is an unstable equilibrium. A trajectory may satisfy

x(t) -> p as t -> -infinity,

while moving away from p for increasing time.

Then p belongs to the alpha-limit set of the trajectory. The system appears to emerge asymptotically from p.

This model offers a stronger mathematical association between Alpha and negative infinity:

Alpha <-> source-like behavior as t -> -infinity.

It has the advantage of representing Alpha as an organizing origin without requiring a first finite moment. The trajectory may have existed for all past time while still being structured by a remote-past state.

The analogy is attractive for a past-eternal cosmology. The universe may have no first time and yet possess an alpha-limit structure from which its development emerges.

However, a repeller is still a state within the system. It may explain the geometric organization of trajectories, but it does not explain the existence of the system itself.

There is also a theological difficulty. A repeller pushes trajectories away, while God as Alpha is not ordinarily understood as merely expelling creation from a divine state. Creation is not a fragment broken away from God through dynamical instability.

The analogy therefore captures source-like organization but not creation ex nihilo, continuing dependence, or personal intention.

11.4 The Asymmetry Between Alpha and Omega

A simple number line suggests symmetry:

Alpha = -infinity,

Omega = +infinity.

The two endpoints appear equal and opposite. Yet the theological meanings of Alpha and Omega are not perfectly symmetrical.

Alpha concerns origin, causation, and dependence. Omega concerns fulfillment, purpose, and consummation. Origin and goal are related, but they are not mirror images.

A source gives rise to a process. A goal draws or directs a process toward completion. In Aristotelian terms, efficient causation and final causation perform different explanatory roles.

The structure is therefore better written as

Alpha --causal grounding--> history --teleological orientation--> Omega.

The arrow from Alpha describes derivation. The arrow toward Omega describes fulfillment.

This asymmetry is especially important in Teilhard's thought. Cosmogenesis does not simply travel from one infinite boundary to another. It develops through irreversible thresholds: matter, life, consciousness, reflection, and collective organization.

The universe near Omega is not merely the universe near Alpha viewed in reverse. New forms of complexity and consciousness have emerged. The process has history.

A symmetrical model based on -infinity and +infinity may describe temporal extension. It does not by itself describe evolutionary novelty, irreversible development, or purpose.

Teilhard's theology therefore requires a directional structure richer than a geometrically balanced line.

11.5 The Presence of Omega Within History

Teilhard's Omega is not absent until the end of time. If Omega were merely a final condition waiting in the distant future, it could not fully explain the present direction of convergence.

Omega must be active within history as a principle of attraction. The future fulfillment is already influential in the process that leads toward it.

This claim can be expressed analogically as

future convergence shapes present becoming.

In ordinary dynamical systems, future states do not necessarily cause present states backward through time. The equations determine trajectories from present conditions. Yet an attractor can still organize the future behavior of a broad region of the state space.

Teilhard goes further. Omega is not only a mathematical basin of attraction. It is a transcendent personal reality whose presence operates within cosmic and human development.

The Christological form of this claim is that Christ is not merely the last event of history. Christ is already present as the ground, meaning, and direction of the process.

The structure becomes

Christ as Alpha,

Christ within history,

Christ as Omega.

This threefold relation avoids placing Christ only at the temporal boundaries. The same reality is source, sustaining presence, and fulfillment.

Omega is therefore eschatological without being merely postponed. Its future completion is anticipated in present acts of truth, love, creativity, communion, and spiritual transformation.

11.6 Freedom, Contingency, and Convergence

A major difficulty for any theology of convergence is the relation between direction and freedom. If the universe necessarily moves toward Omega, does genuine contingency remain? Are persons free, or are they merely carried along by an inevitable cosmic mechanism?

Teilhard's vision cannot be reduced to strict determinism without damaging its personal character. Personal union requires freedom. Love compelled mechanically would not be love in the full theological sense.

The process must therefore combine direction with openness. The universe may possess a broad tendency toward complexity and consciousness while allowing multiple pathways, failures, regressions, and unpredictable developments.

A schematic model might be

many possible trajectories -> constrained field of development -> possible convergence.

This differs from

one predetermined trajectory -> unavoidable final state.

The first allows history to matter. Decisions, institutions, discoveries, moral failures, and acts of love affect the path of development.

Omega may function as the ultimate horizon of fulfillment without determining every intermediate event in advance. Convergence can be understood as invitation and attraction rather than mechanical coercion.

This introduces a theological distinction between inevitability and faithfulness. The final purpose may be secure in God while the historical route remains contingent and participatory.

Human beings are not passive particles falling automatically into an attractor. They become conscious participants in the movement toward or away from deeper union.

11.7 Personal Convergence Versus Mechanical Determinism

Mechanical convergence reduces differences among trajectories through impersonal law. Personal convergence must preserve and deepen distinction.

In many dynamical systems, trajectories entering the same attractor lose information about their initial conditions. Their long-term behavior becomes increasingly similar.

If theological convergence worked in this way, individuality might disappear. Persons would be absorbed into an undifferentiated whole.

Teilhard rejects this outcome. His principle of union through differentiation holds that true unity strengthens personhood. Persons become more themselves through deeper relation rather than through isolation or dissolution.

The contrast may be represented as

mechanical convergence:

difference -> reduction -> uniformity,

personal convergence:

difference -> relation -> communion.

The first tends toward sameness. The second tends toward unity without erasure.

This distinction is central to identifying Omega with Christ. Christian fulfillment is not the cancellation of personality but communion among persons and with God.

Love provides the model. Love unites distinct persons while requiring that they remain distinct. If distinction vanished, relationship would vanish with it.

Teilhard's Omega must therefore be hyper-personal rather than impersonal. It is not a cosmic machine producing uniformity. It is a center capable of sustaining maximal unity together with maximal differentiation.

This claim marks the boundary between dynamical analogy and theology. Mathematics can describe convergence. It cannot, by itself, distinguish communion from absorption or love from constraint.

11.8 Christ as Alpha, Medium, and Omega

The most complete Teilhardian synthesis identifies Christ not only as Alpha and Omega but also as the medium within which cosmogenesis unfolds.

Christ as Alpha means that creation derives from divine creativity.

Christ as medium means that the process is sustained, penetrated, and oriented by divine presence.

Christ as Omega means that creation reaches fulfillment in personal union with the same divine reality from which it came.

The structure may be expressed as

from Christ -> through Christ -> toward Christ.

This formulation is more adequate than a simple line from zero to infinity. It does not place Christ only at the initial and final boundaries while leaving the middle theologically empty.

The entire developmental sequence is enclosed within the Alpha–Omega relation:

Alpha -> matter -> life -> consciousness -> noosphere -> Omega.

Yet Christ is present at every stage, not only at the two ends.

This produces a theological dynamical model with three explanatory levels.

At the physical level, laws and initial conditions shape trajectories.

At the evolutionary level, complexity, selection, cooperation, and communication generate new forms of organization.

At the theological level, the process exists from, within, and toward divine reality.

These levels should not be confused. Divine action is not merely one additional physical force. Omega is not another variable appended to the equations. Theology interprets the existence, direction, and ultimate meaning of the process.

A Teilhardian dynamical theology therefore proposes neither a purely static creation nor a purely mechanical evolution. It envisions a universe whose becoming is real, whose novelty is significant, and whose ultimate orientation is personal.

Alpha is not merely zero.

Alpha is not merely the direction t -> -infinity.

Omega is not merely unbounded future time.

Omega is not merely a mathematical attractor.

The deepest structure is

divine source -> free and evolving creation -> personal fulfillment.

Within this framework, zero may mark the first physical state, negative infinity may represent a past-eternal trajectory, and an attractor may model convergence. None of these mathematical structures exhausts the theological meaning.

The value of dynamical language lies in showing that a future center can organize a developmental process, that remote-past structure differs from a first moment, and that convergence can be described without requiring a finite terminal point.

The value of Teilhard's theology lies in adding dimensions that mathematics does not supply by itself: personality, love, freedom, transcendence, and purpose.

The resulting synthesis preserves the central insight of Alpha and Omega. The origin and fulfillment of creation are not two unrelated realities. They are the same divine Christ encountered under different relations: as the source from whom the cosmos proceeds, the presence through whom it develops, and the Omega toward whom it converges.

12. Conclusion: Alpha Beyond Zero and Negative Infinity

12.1 The Conditional Mathematical Answer

The original question asks whether Alpha should be assigned to zero or negative infinity if Omega is associated with infinity. The mathematical answer is conditional because the correct assignment depends upon the structure being modeled.

If the structure is a one-sided sequence with a first state, then zero is the natural choice:

Alpha = 0.

The process may be written as

0, 1, 2, 3, ...,

or as a temporal domain

0 <= t < +infinity.

Here zero is an actual member of the system. It marks initialization. There is no earlier permitted state within the model.

If the structure is a two-sided line extending without bound in both directions, then Alpha is naturally associated with negative infinity:

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity,

Omega <-> t -> +infinity.

In this model, Alpha is not a first finite point. It represents the remote-past direction. Negative infinity expresses the absence of a least finite time rather than the existence of an infinitely distant first moment.

Dynamical-systems theory provides the clearest formal use of this correspondence. The alpha-limit set describes the states approached as time tends toward negative infinity. The omega-limit set describes the states approached as time tends toward positive infinity. Neither limit set is identical to an infinity. Each is a set of states associated with one temporal direction.

Ordinal mathematics produces a different result. In the ordinal sequence

0, 1, 2, 3, ..., omega,

zero is the least ordinal and omega is the first infinite ordinal. Here the natural pairing is

Alpha = 0,

Omega = omega.

The extended real numbers permit yet another convention:

Alpha = -infinity,

Omega = +infinity.

This assignment is formally legitimate because the two ideal boundary elements have been adjoined by definition. It does not transfer automatically to the ordinary real numbers, ordinal numbers, cosmology, or theology.

The mathematical conclusion is therefore not a compromise between zero and negative infinity. It is a rule of interpretation:

Choose zero when Alpha means the first state of an initialized system.

Choose negative infinity when Alpha means the unbounded direction of the remote past.

Do not assign either value until the domain, ordering, endpoints, and meaning of the variables have been specified.

12.2 The Theological Answer

Classical Christian theology does not identify Alpha adequately with either zero or negative infinity. Both belong to mathematical structures. God as Alpha is understood as the source upon which every created structure depends.

Zero may represent the first moment of created time. It may mark a coordinate boundary, an initial condition, or the absence of a measured quantity. Yet God is not the number zero. Zero is defined within mathematics, while divine Alpha is invoked as the source of mathematical order, physical existence, time, and intelligibility.

Negative infinity may represent a past without beginning. It may describe time extending indefinitely backward or a trajectory examined in the remote-past direction. Yet God is not a temporal location at t = -infinity. In the ordinary real line, no such temporal point exists. Negative infinity expresses unbounded recession.

Theological Alpha is therefore ontological rather than merely chronological. It answers the question

Why is there a temporal order at all?

rather than only

At what coordinate does temporal order begin?

This distinction allows Christian theology to remain compatible, at least conceptually, with more than one cosmological architecture. A universe beginning at t = 0 may depend upon God. A past-eternal universe extending toward t -> -infinity may also depend upon God. Temporal finitude and created dependence are not identical claims.

The same distinction applies to Omega. Positive infinity may represent endless future duration, but theological Omega signifies fulfillment. An infinite series of later events does not necessarily culminate in purpose. The sequence may continue forever without reaching consummation.

Theological Omega answers not merely

How long does creation continue?

but

In what does creation reach its intended end?

The Alpha–Omega pair therefore expresses two relations of creation to the same divine reality:

Alpha as source,

Omega as fulfillment.

These relations encompass time without being reducible to the endpoints of time.

12.3 The Teilhardian Answer

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin places the Alpha–Omega question within an evolutionary universe. Creation is not only an initial act but an unfolding cosmogenesis. Matter develops into increasingly organized forms, life emerges, consciousness becomes reflective, and human thought forms a planetary network of communication and awareness.

The process may be summarized as

matter -> life -> consciousness -> noosphere -> Omega.

For Teilhard, Omega is not simply positive infinity. It is not a variable growing without bound, a final date, or an impersonal terminal condition. Omega is the personal center toward which consciousness and creation converge.

This convergence is not merely aggregation. Increasing numbers of people, machines, messages, or institutions do not automatically produce Omega. Genuine convergence requires unity that preserves and intensifies personality.

Teilhard's Omega is therefore personal rather than abstract, unifying rather than merely extensive, and Christological rather than merely cosmological. It is identified with Christ as the final center of communion and fulfillment.

Alpha, in the same framework, cannot be reduced to the earliest physical state. A cosmic timeline may begin at t = 0, or it may have a more complex past. Divine Alpha refers to the creative source of the entire evolutionary capacity of the universe.

Teilhard's likely answer can therefore be stated in three levels:

The beginning of a measured cosmic epoch may be assigned t = 0.

The remote past of a past-eternal process may be represented by t -> -infinity.

Divine Alpha is neither coordinate. It is the source of cosmogenesis itself.

The Teilhardian synthesis unites Alpha and Omega in Christ:

from Christ -> through cosmic becoming -> toward Christ.

The source and fulfillment are the same divine reality encountered under different relations. Alpha grounds the process. Omega attracts and completes it. Christ is also present within the process rather than absent between the two symbolic boundaries.

Teilhard thus transforms the question. Instead of asking only where Alpha is located, he asks what kind of universe can emerge from Alpha and converge toward Omega. The answer is a universe whose matter is capable of life, whose life is capable of reflection, and whose consciousness is capable of communion.

12.4 The Eulerian Answer

Leonhard Euler would likely resist assigning Alpha a value before the mathematical problem had been defined. Greek letters do not determine their own numerical meanings. Their values arise from equations, domains, conventions, and relations.

Euler's likely procedure would be:

Define the variables.

Specify the allowed values.

Determine whether the system has a least element.

Distinguish an actual endpoint from an unbounded direction.

Clarify whether infinity is a number, limit, symbol, or mode of divergence.

Only then assign Alpha and Omega.

For an initialized sequence,

Alpha = 0

would be entirely natural.

For the full number line,

Alpha <-> -infinity

would represent the negative unbounded direction, while Omega would represent the positive unbounded direction.

For a parameter called alpha, neither value would follow without further definition.

Euler's most important contribution to the discussion is therefore methodological rather than doctrinal. He would demand that symbolic intuition be disciplined by formal structure.

The Eulerian answer may be summarized as

Alpha has no mathematical value until the system assigns one.

This principle prevents the alphabetic symbolism of first and last from being confused with numerical necessity. Alpha is the first Greek letter, but a variable alpha need not be the first value. Omega is the last Greek letter, but mathematical omega may denote an angular frequency, a set, an ordinal, or something else entirely.

Euler's approach also sharpens the distinction between process and limit. A variable may tend toward infinity without reaching a final number. A sequence may possess a first term but no final term. A limit may exist even when no term equals it.

These distinctions show why the Alpha–Omega analogy requires careful definitions before it can become mathematics.

12.5 A Unified Vocabulary

The discussion can be clarified by distinguishing six concepts that are often hidden within the words beginning and end.

A first state is the earliest member of a defined process. It may be written as

x(0) = x_0.

A first moment is the earliest temporal coordinate belonging to a model:

t = 0.

A remote-past direction describes behavior as

t -> -infinity.

A causal source is that upon which the existence of the process depends.

A remote-future limit describes behavior as

t -> +infinity.

A final purpose is the fulfillment toward which the process is ordered.

These concepts should not be collapsed.

A first state belongs to a system.

A causal source may stand outside the system's internal sequence.

A remote-past limit implies that no first finite moment need exist.

A remote-future limit may organize long-term behavior without providing purpose.

A terminal event may end a process without fulfilling it.

A final purpose may be active throughout the process rather than appearing only after its last event.

The vocabulary can be organized as follows:

Alpha as zero:

first state or first temporal coordinate.

Alpha as negative infinity:

remote-past direction or alpha-limit behavior.

Alpha as theological source:

ontological ground of the entire process.

Omega as positive infinity:

unbounded future direction.

Omega as omega-limit:

states approached in long-term evolution.

Omega as theological fulfillment:

final purpose, consummation, and completed communion.

This unified vocabulary allows each discipline to retain its proper meaning. Mathematics defines the internal structures precisely. Cosmology studies the physical architecture of time and cosmic development. Theology addresses ultimate dependence and purpose. Teilhardian thought connects evolutionary becoming with personal fulfillment in Christ.

The goal is not to select one vocabulary and eliminate the others. It is to prevent one meaning from silently replacing another.

12.6 Final Synthesis

The original alternatives, zero and negative infinity, represent two distinct intuitions about beginning.

Zero expresses initialization. It says that a process has a first state or first measured moment.

Negative infinity expresses unbounded recession. It says that the process has no first finite moment but can still be examined in the remote-past direction.

Both are mathematically coherent when properly defined. Neither is universally correct.

The fullest synthesis is layered:

For a one-sided sequence,

Alpha = 0.

For a bi-infinite dynamical trajectory,

Alpha <-> t -> -infinity.

For classical theology,

Alpha = ontological source.

For Teilhardian theology,

Alpha = divine source of cosmogenesis,

Omega = personal center of convergence in Christ.

This layered interpretation prevents false conflict. Zero and negative infinity do not compete as answers to exactly the same question. Zero answers the question of an initial coordinate. Negative infinity answers the question of an unbounded past direction. Theology asks a deeper question concerning the source of both possible structures.

The same reasoning applies to Omega. Positive infinity describes unbounded continuation. An omega-limit set describes asymptotic behavior. Theological Omega describes fulfillment. Teilhard's Omega describes personal and Christological convergence.

The Alpha–Omega structure is therefore richer than the line

-infinity < t < +infinity.

It is also richer than the ray

0 <= t < +infinity.

Those structures describe possible temporal architectures. They do not by themselves express creation, meaning, freedom, consciousness, love, or consummation.

A more comprehensive symbolic form is

Alpha -> becoming -> Omega.

Here Alpha is not merely behind the process. Alpha is its sustaining source. Omega is not merely after the process. Omega is the fulfillment already giving direction to becoming.

A Teilhardian expansion of the structure is

Alpha -> matter -> life -> consciousness -> communion -> Omega.

The arrows signify genuine emergence. The later stages are not simply repetitions of the earlier ones. Life introduces new organization. Reflection introduces self-awareness. Communion introduces personal union without erasing difference.

The final theological synthesis is therefore not that Alpha equals zero or that Alpha equals negative infinity. It is that mathematical systems offer partial models of distinct aspects of origin.

Zero models a first state.

Negative infinity models a beginningless past.

An alpha-limit set models remote-past organization.

None of them alone models the ontological source of existence.

Likewise,

positive infinity models unbounded continuation,

an omega-limit set models future asymptotic organization,

and an attractor models convergence.

None of them alone models personal and purposeful fulfillment.

The deepest Alpha is not simply the earliest point on the line. It is the reason there is a line, an order, a law, a state space, or a universe capable of history.

The deepest Omega is not simply the farthest point toward which the line extends. It is the fulfillment in which history becomes intelligible as a whole.

In mathematical language, Alpha may be zero or associated with negative infinity.

In classical theology, Alpha transcends both.

In Teilhard's evolutionary theology, Alpha is the divine source from whom cosmogenesis proceeds, while Omega is the same divine reality drawing creation toward conscious and personal unity.

The paper's final conclusion may therefore be stated as follows:

Alpha = 0 when beginning means initialization.

Alpha <-> -infinity when beginning means the indefinitely remote past.

Alpha transcends both when beginning means the source of being.

Omega <-> +infinity when end means unbounded future direction.

Omega transcends infinity when end means personal and purposeful fulfillment.

The Alpha–Omega mystery is not solved by choosing one number. It is clarified by recognizing several levels of meaning and assigning each symbol only within the structure where it properly belongs.

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